commonweal

The Editors
BUDGET II

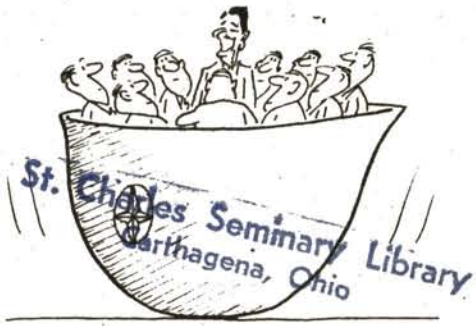
Questions about Lebanon

$1.25

JULY 16, 1982

DAVID C. MORRISON
ARMAGEDDON IN TRIPLICATE

THOMAS POWERS
THE 12TH OF JUNE, & AFTER



St. Charles Seminary Library
Carthagena, Ohio

JAMES O'GARA
THE VIEW IN WEST GERMANY

DAVID R. LOWRY
KEEPING CATHOLICS IN THEIR PLACE

DESMOND O'GRADY
TERRORISM ON TRIAL

MARY MEEHAN
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE

JOHN GARVEY
EASY ATHEISM

ABIGAIL McCARTHY
DIGNITY & AGE

BOOKS, SCREEN, CORRESPONDENCE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Correspondence

Oops indeed

Seattle, Wash.

To the Editors: Thanks very much to *Commentary*, oops, I mean *Commonweal*, for your correction in the issue of May 7.

GEORGE S. WEIGEL, JR.
World Without War Council

Far from moribund

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Michael McCauley (May 7) refers to the "moribund Association of Chicago Priests." . . .

If the ACP is "moribund" because it chose not to trample on the cardinal, a man who "was down," at the time of the *Sun-Times* story, it was because we knew that whatever facts were there were history and that, once established, the Chicago church, "Corporation Sole," and other items of administration could never be the same. Besides our concern for an ailing man we also regretted and resented the "yellow journalism" of the *Sun-Times* which I would have thought beneath a former active Protestant clergyman, Roy Larson.

The "moribund" ACP organized a very successful program on young priests' concerns last year. The board labored hard to get new young members for the coming year. Of the second-year members I am sixty; one is in the late sixties; two are in their fifties. Not so with the new board. Our chairman is ordained three years; some are in their twenties; the majority are under forty. We conducted a very successful afternoon reflection on nuclear armaments for three hundred people in March. Seven hundred attended our Mardi Gras fundraising party in late February. Chicago Catholics are much too sophisticated to attend events in those numbers when conducted by a "moribund" group. For a number of years ACP's sprightly journal, *Upturn*, has delighted the membership, a fact we found out in a poll of members last fall. ACP has done more, but why go on? McCauley writes in a brisk authoritarian journalese. There is only one problem. His is wrong. . . .

(REV.) C.J. BRANNEN, S.J.
A.C.P. Board Member

Parish plans

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Michael F. McCauley uses a phrase that might unintentionally confuse readers. He writes [May 7] that "Cody recently irritated Chicago pastors when he demanded out of the blue that all parishes in the archdiocese meet a subscription quota for the official weekly newspaper, *(The) Chicago Catholic*."

Early in January Cardinal Cody, then in the hospital, sent a letter to pastors mandating a 40 percent parish coverage plan. The existing plan at that time called for 50 percent and the plan instituted by Archbishop Cody some sixteen years ago called for 100 percent. The January objections related to what the pastors saw as a failure to consult about the changes, which substituted a mandatory 40 percent plan for a voluntary 50 percent plan.

There are now 128 diocesan parish coverage plans in the United States. Of these 70 are mandatory, 48 voluntary, and the rest difficult to categorize. There are 39 plans calling for 100 percent coverage. Approximately 80 percent of the dioceses with newspapers have parish coverage plans.

A.E.P. WALL
Editor, *The Chicago Catholic*

'Mean-spirited'

Princeton, N.J.

To the Editors: It is the author's fate to be misunderstood. That is nothing new. If that were all that was involved in Margaret Canovan's review of *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* [May 7], I would let matters be and consider it my misfortune that my book and *Commonweal*'s reviewer were such a mismatch.

But Ms. Canovan goes beyond misreading to enter the sphere of mean-spirited cant. Hence a response is required. She laments that my book does not live up to its promise to be "nasty." Apparently by "nasty" she understands "spiteful," a term her review perfectly exemplifies. In that sense my book is not nasty — she is right. But I drew the term from a letter by Wittgenstein. By "nasty" Wittgenstein meant "that which is difficult to think through" and "that which challenges received views." My treatment of the history of Western political thought, which Canovan dismisses *is* nasty in this sense. It takes up language, a central concern with women. That Ms. Canovan missed this entirely either means she is ignorant of a whole range of concerns that have most deeply engaged this century's most important thinkers or, more likely, that she doesn't understand what is at stake in these vital matters.

Her general lack of comprehension is fueled by a petty animus against the "realm of necessity," a scandal my book sets out to challenge. Canovan uncritically celebrates a sphere of publicity without any substantive evaluation of the ends and purposes of that realm. In an era when the public arena is largely a world of Hegel's 'civil society,' a world in which narcissism is touted as liberation and self-interest is construed as that for which politics exists, social critics with a conscience must challenge the terms of public life even as they involve themselves in it.

Finally, it is odd to be demeaned for being a good mother, as if this were some sort of taint one must live down. Ms. Canovan implies that one cannot keep one's mothering as a central focus as one engages in public discourse. In other words, she demands that one strip off the particular if one wishes to ascend to the

(Continued on page 411)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mi. 48106. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Copyright © 1982 Commonweal Publishing Co.

Illustrations: Cover & pp. 395, 398, 399, Cork, Amsterdam; cover & pp. 389, 393, 402, 403, 405, Bas., *Tachydromos*; p. 400, *Tribune*, LNS; p. 401, Rita Corbin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

Volume CIX, Number 13

Correspondence	386
Editorials	387
Terrorism on trial: *Desmond O'Grady*	389
Feminists for life: *Mary Meehan*	391
The 12th of June: *Thomas Powers*	393
Easy atheism: *John Garvey*	394
Fruit of their years: *Abigail McCarthy*	396
Armageddon in triplicate: *David C. Morrison*	398
Keeping Catholics in their place: *David R. Lowry*	400
The view in Germany: *James O'Gara*	402
Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.*	405

Books

Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective: *Daniel C. Maguire*	408
Headbirths, or the Germans Are Dying Out/The Safety Net: *David H. Richter*	409
The Talk Show Murders: *Peter Steinfels*	410

Staff

Editor: James O'Gara
Executive Editor: Peter Steinfels
Assistant Editor: David Toolan
Editorial Assistant: Anne Robertson
Columnists: John Garvey, J. Bryan Hehir, Abigail McCarthy, Thomas Powers
Movies: Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.
Poetry: Rosemary Deen, Marie Ponsot
Correspondents: Brian Wicker (Great Britain). Desmond Fisher (Dublin). Alain Woodrow (Paris).
Staff: Karen F. Silva, Harriette Balsky, Sheila Tanksley
Advertising Manager: Ruth E. Taylor
Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

Commonweal, A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $24; Canada, $26; foreign, $29. Special two-year rate: U.S., $43; Canada, $47; foreign, $53. Single copy, $1.25.

commonweal

THE MAKING OF BUDGET II

WHAT WITH THE RESIGNATION of Alexander Haig, continuing war in the Middle East, the opening of strategic arms talks between the superpowers, the furor over Hinckley's acquittal, the demise of the ERA, and even the birth of the latest Prince Charming, most people stopped paying attention to the final rounds of this year's fight over the budget. They didn't miss much. After months upon months of build-up — sparring, negotiating, name-calling — followed by the actual contest with its many feints, clinches, and wild punches, the denouement was disappointing. Budget II turned out to be a weak remake of Budget I. The Democrats folded, Ronnie triumphed again, the Dow Jones stood up and cheered (momentarily), and the poor took it on the chin.

It's that last point which ultimately concerns us here. But the treatment of the poor is not the only thing that could be discussed about this budget, perhaps not even the most important thing. The administration has declared the budget its compass for leading the economy out of the swamp — and the poor, like all the rest of us, have an obvious stake in that journey. Unfortunately, no one, rich or poor, can have any confidence that the course the administration is plotting will lead to economic high ground.

Mr. Reagan took office pledging to cut taxes (disproportionately for the rich) and "unleash" business from regulation, thereby providing both incentive for expansion and new funds for capital spending. Capital spending, in turn, would increase productivity, driving down inflation. The spurt in real economic growth would produce new tax revenues so that a balanced budget could be quickly achieved despite the lowered tax rates. In the meantime, inflation would be controlled by slashing government spending so as to minimize interim deficits and by maintaining the Federal Reserve's tight money policy.

The president's critics said his plan wouldn't work. They said that the stimulative tax-cutting of the supply-siders and the dampening tight money of the Fed and the monetarists would work at cross purposes with one another. They said that the tax cuts would be an unreliable way to obtain new capital expenditure. They said the president's budget cutting would be offset by his proposed military expenditures and by the drop in federal revenues owed to a flagging economy. Huge deficits would loom, and the administration would remain trapped between the dangers of runaway inflation and strangulation by high interest rates.

So far, the critics have been right.

Having previously, and probably unwisely, encouraged the country to believe that only a balanced budget by 1984 could deliver a sound economy, and having promised only a $45 billion deficit in 1983 on the way to that balanced budgt, the president must now allow for a deficit of twice that size (or much more, if one doubts the administration's slippery figures). Despite devices like All-Savers certificates and IRAs, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

savings rate is running about normal for a recession period. Capital expenditure by business is down, understandably so in view of high interest rates, sagging demand, and general economic uncertainty. Bankruptcies for the businessman and unemployment for the worker have reached levels unknown since the Depression.

The administration has prepared its defenses. Originally, its new economic course was supposed to have an immediate impact, thanks to "an electric effect on expectations." Who said that? Why, that model of moderation and sagacity now chosen to fill the Haig boots, Mr. George Shultz, then a Reagan economic advisor. Later, it was said that the program couldn't be judged till we saw the effect of last year's tax cuts for business, or until the personal income tax was cut five percent last October. Now, judgment must wait upon the impact of the additional tax cut this July 1. Or upon the impact of next year's cut. One administration defender claims the programs can only be evaluated in terms of average income levels over the next twenty years. Other lines of defense include grumbling at the Fed and complaining that the president hasn't been given all the tax and spending cuts he asked. In fact, Mr. Reagan has got what he wanted from the Fed, and far more of what he wanted from Congress than any president since FDR.

The administration's one distinct accomplishment, bringing down the rate of inflation, has been achieved by that unprecedented post-Depression unemployment (along with a few lucky breaks, like the springtime oil glut) and by the consequent "labor discipline" — in short, by the oldest trick in the economics manual. But that's not the only oddity about the administration's claims to a new economic approach. The July 1 tax cuts were originally proposed in order to encourage savings — that was the excuse for biasing them toward upper-income brackets, since the rich save more. But now they are being heralded as a stimulus to consumption, i.e., spending rather than saving — a demand-side exit from the recession, retaining, of course, the bias toward the wealthy from their earlier rationale.

What has all this to do with the poor? During the budget debate, the administration tried to deny that its proposals struck unduly at the poor. The president himself, as well as assorted administration apologists, claimed that the administration had merely slowed the growth of programs for the poor. These claims are transparently false. Taken as a whole, domestic social spending is still gradually increasing. But most of that spending is not now and never has been for the poor. Many of the programs specifically for the poor are being cut, absolutely, not just slowed: AFDC from $7.8 billion to $6.4; jobs and training from $5.6 billion to around $3 billion. Funding for pregnant teenagers has been cut drastically since the adminstration took office; so have other programs aimed at providing health care for women and children. About three million poor children have lost their school lunches. Food stamp benefits have been seriously cut, once inflation is taken into account — and in the face of growing numbers of eligible citizens. Things would be much worse if Congress hadn't modified the president's proposals.

Some administration officials quietly believe that these cuts are a positive benefit to the poor. Rather than demoralizing them further, the cuts will give them the gumption to go find the jobs that have somehow eluded ten million other out-of-work Americans. Other officials argue, quite rightly, that the poor's best prospects lie in economic recovery. But the administration's plan for economic recovery seems a very risky gamble, one that might be examined more carefully if it weren't the poor's welfare being disproportionately used for stakes. There is no such thing as a free lunch, say the economists. You're right, the administration has answered, so let the poor and the unemployed pay for it.

ISRAEL IN LEBANON

Q. *Can Israel's invasion of Lebanon be justified?*

A. Not by us. In the days before the invasion, the Israeli ambassador to London was shot, and Israel immediately blamed the PLO. In point of fact, the three men picked up by the British police in connection with the crime were deadly enemies of Yassir Arafat and the PLO leadership. No matter — the Israelis proceeded to carry out large-scale bombing raids against the PLO in Lebanon. In retaliation, the Palestinians then shelled Israeli towns. This, the Israelis said, was intolerable, and the invasion followed.

Q. *But wasn't there some PLO provocation?*

A. Yes. The PLO over its lifetime has made a terrible mistake in not renouncing terrorism in favor of political means and in not publicly accepting the existence of Israel. Terrorism has hurt rather than helped the Palestinian cause. But who are the terrorists in this case? There is a tremendous disproportion between the harm Israel claims to have suffered at the hands of the Palestinians and the damage it has inflicted on the innocent in Lebanon. The full nationwide extent of the toll taken by the Israelis is not yet reliably known, but early U.S. State Department estimates are that in Beirut alone 10,000 civilians were killed or injured, and the Israeli forces are still poised at the edge of the city as this is written — all this in a war in which the International Red Cross estimates that 600,000 people have been turned into refugees.

Q. *What will happen now?*

A. The Lebanese government has been for all practical purposes non-existent since the PLO and the Syrians began to occupy the country, destroying the previous delicate balance between rival religious and political groups. It is extremely unlikely that the Israelis can recreate a strong and stable government in Lebanon; they are too identified with one faction, the Christian Phalangists. The Israelis say that they want not one inch of Lebanese territory but that they will not withdraw until there is a well-policed buffer zone in the south-

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual summer schedule, only one issue will be published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated August 13.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ern one-third of the country to eliminate any shelling by the PLO of Israeli towns.

Q. *Does this mean the Israelis will stay in Lebanon for a long time?*

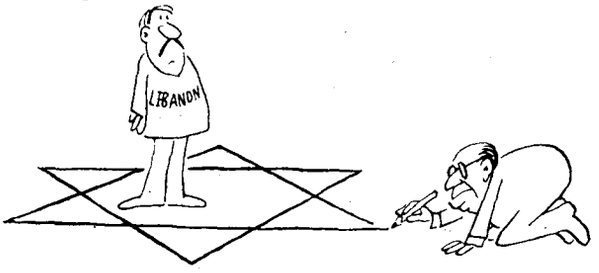
A. Not if they can help it. The Lebanese operation already served as a heavy drain on their fragile economy, and keeping reserve troops drawn from their civilian occupations for a long period in Lebanon would be an economic disaster in a country where inflation already runs over 100 percent. What the Israelis want: the U.S. to organize and be a part of a multinational force that would allow their troops to withdraw.

Q. *Should the U.S. accede to Israeli wishes on this?*

A. There are weighty arguments against our doing any such thing. Stationing U.S. troops in Lebanon would turn us into another occupying force, with all the onus from the Arab states that such a position inevitably would entail. It would put the U.S. hip-deep into the unique socio-religious quagmire that is Lebanese politics. Such an action by the U.S. might well induce the Soviet Union to do likewise for its client, Syria, with all the dangers that such an eyeball to eyeball confrontation could bring. Comparisons are made by those who urge such U.S. involvement with the Sinai occupation to which U.S. troops are committed, but there is really little similarity between the two situations.

Q. *Does this mean that the U.S. should flatly refuse to organize or participate in such a multinational effort in Lebanon?*

A. No, but it means we should put a price-tag on our participation. We should be willing to play a role in Lebanon only if the effort is made part of a genuine larger effort to finally solve the Palestinian problem. Despite the heavy casualties in Lebanon, there are still 600,000 Palestinians in that country and over a million more on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. No matter how many members of the PLO the Israelis manage to kill, the bulk of the Palestinian people will still remain and their real grievances will only fester and grow worse. The U.S. should weigh the Lebanese question very carefully, and before it agrees to send troops to relieve the Israelis of their self-imposed burden, there must be a solemn guarantee from Palestinians and Israelis alike of a genuine effort at conciliation and compromise, with the ultimate goal a reasonable answer to the Palestinian demand for autonomy and a national home, as well as of security for Israel. Messrs. Begin and Sharon to the contrary, Israel must realize that constant recourse to military action will not provide any lasting solution. It is for such a solution that the U.S. should work, and it is only with such a solution in view that we should consider a presence in Lebanon.



Report from Rome

TERRORISM ON TRIAL

THE RED BRIGADES IN COURT

THE RED BRIGADES could intercept police radio communications, handle sophisticated weapons, manipulate the media, falsify documents with consummate skill. But Italian plumbing was too much for them.

Mario Moretti, one of the Red Brigades' leaders, tried unsuccessfully to repair the leaky shower in the Rome apartment from which he ran the Aldo Moro kidnapping and imprisonment. The Brigadists' hideout was discovered because those living below, seeing a spreading water stain, summoned the fire brigade. A similar inability to fix the plumbing had earlier led to the arrest in Pavia of Patrizio Pelli, right-hand man of the Red Brigades' founder Renato Curcio.

These are among the quainter episodes to emerge during the current "Moro trial" in Rome. Another is that the Red Brigades stole nine cars for the Moro kidnapping — but two were, in turn, stolen from them before the kidnapping of the former prime minister on March 16, 1978.

Such details, like the explosion of a television bulb which made everyone in court duck, enliven the trial which began in April and may not end before October or even the year's end.

As theater, the trials lack the effectiveness of the Brigadists' trial of Moro and other hostages. In a society which expects ever more dramatic spectacles, the terrorists' "theater of cruelty" has far more impact. Yet the trial is taking place in a zone devoted to big spectacles. It is at the end of a Mussolini-built sports complex on the Vatican side of the Tiber flanking the river. A white obelisk inscribed MUSSOLINI DUX stands before the Olympic running stadium surrounded by figleafed marble statues of athletes; covered swimming pools; a soccer ground which can hold 80,000; the courts where the Italian tennis championships are played in May; and the white cement gymnasium which has been converted into a courtroom.

It is guarded by fifteen hundred police who patrol; sit in riot cars; and, submachine guns at neck, prowl the roof of a flanking gymnasium. In the barricaded area around the courtroom, there are checkpoints and a metal detector, but the atmosphere is relaxed. The green-carpeted courtroom, where basketball was once played, is painted white and illuminated by television arc lights. The slogan "The law is equal for all" is visible but not the crucifix which is found in most Italian courtrooms. Daily perhaps thirty people, some of them friends of the Brigadists, are in the public seats at the back of the courts. Divided from them are rows of tables for journalists, then another four rows for the black-gowned lawyers.

The white cage for the accused makes the court look like a zoo. There are six compartments. The first, for those who have repented, is separated from the others by bullet-proof glass.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The prisoners' handcuffs are removed in the cages, they sit on benches and, using microphones which stand outside, address the judge. The atmosphere is less formal than in Anglo-Saxon courts. When the court is not in session, the Brigadists tell journalists they are reading their articles and will avenge their lies.

The inhabitants of the courtroom zoo still threaten, still attempt to seize the initiative from the unflurried, greying Sicilian judge Severino Santiapichi. With his white cotton bib and tasseled black gown, Santiapichi so resembles the actor Vittorio De Sica it seems he has wandered in from central casting.

The Brigadists on trial are mostly shortish, compact men. They seem competent, specialized workers who one day decided to make a revolution. It requires an effort to bring to mind that this means, for them, the right to hunt people, try them in secret, and butcher them with no recourse against the sentence. "Proletarian justice" entails kneecapping people as they leave for work; riddling magistrates with bullets; living with mild Moro for fifty-four days, sharing the same food, the same lavatory, watching him sleep, promising him release, then shooting him around the heart.

There is Moro's interrogator, Mario Moretti, heavy-eyed, moustached, an easy man to overlook, which may explain how he acquired a Scarlet Pimpernel reputation before he was picked up in Milan after betrayal by a minor criminal one of the Brigadists had tried to proselytize in prison. And Prospero Gallinari, tall and well-built, whose gold-rimmed glasses contribute to his professorial appearance. Despite his prepossessing air, he is more Caliban than Prospero if the charge of being Moro's jailer and executioner sticks.

THE GREATEST CURIOSITY concerns those who have repented, particularly Antonio Savasta and Patrizio Peci. Savasta was arrested when, in December, police won the release of the American NATO General James Lee Dozier and dealt a decisive blow against left-wing terrorists.

Accused of involvement in seventeen killings, Savasta emptied the sack on his former comrades from the time of his arrest. The resultant distaste for him colors journalists' description of pale-skinned, bespectacled Savasta as having the face of a "hypocritical seminarian."

His language is more intriguing than his face. He has the greatest difficulty in calling a spade a spade or a killing a killing: rather it becomes merely "expressing violence." On several occasions the judge tried to break through this abstract jargon but with limited success.

Savasta, 26, was an outstanding student at the classical secondary school in Centocelle, one of Rome's poorer suburbs. At the trial he said his masters were Marx, Lenin, and Mao. He joined the local Communist party branch and took part in actions such as attacking the local Christian Democratic branch, burning cars, and instigating others to rebel against the middle-class code. These illegal activities gradually brought him to the "armed party," those determined-to-be-real Communists rather than the "sell-out" followers of Italian Communist party leader Enrico Berlinguer. The "real" Communists believed political ends justified any means.

Recent defeats of leftist extremists have forced many of his followers to reconsider. Savasta has been accused of opportunism, of seeking a reduced sentence with his repentance. But one of his exchanges with Santiapichi suggests otherwise.

Savasta became angry at Santiapichi's requests for greater clarity, more details. "You have to respect my human dignity," he protested. "You have to understand that inside the Red Brigades there is a difficult debate, much indecision. You should show there's not only scorn for us." They were the words of a man still mentally with the Brigadists.

"I'm a simple worker for justice," replied the judge, "and I do my duty respecting the accused's dignity. Avoid raising your voice and giving moral judgments. We're trying to ascertain individual responsibility. It's right that you should worry about others [i.e. terrorists] but you have to give us a chance to understand why so many people were killed. Remember that no one can bring them back to life."

Handsome, strongly-built Patrizio Peci was head of the Turin Red Brigades before his repentance. His brother, Roberto, who was not involved in terrorism, paid a terrible price for Patrizio's decision to recant. To discourage other Brigadists from talking to the police, the terrorists kidnapped Roberto and, after the same period of imprisonment as Moro, killed him.

This gave poignancy to Peci's statement that better provisions should be made for terrorists who want to give information to magistrates. "It's difficult to get to talk to magistrates," he stated, "and afterwards the prisoner has to return to share a cell with terrorists who, in one way or another, will convince him not to talk. Facing certain death is ugly."

Already several points about the Moro affair seem to have been established:

- That Moro behaved with dignity. The Brigadists claimed to try him in the name of the people but Moro pointed out he was president of a party which polled twelve million votes.
- As in a typical Stalinist trial, Moro's death sentence was implicit in the accusations against him. He was being tried not for his individual responsibilities but for his role.
- Appeals made by the pope, Amnesty International, Kurt Waldheim, and Caritas Internationalis had no effect nor did proposed concessions. The only thing which might have saved Moro's life was release of imprisoned terrorists as demanded by the Brigadists.
- As Moro was kidnapped after endorsing a Christian Democrat-Communist understanding, it seemed both parties were under attack. However, both Savasta and Peci maintain the attack was aimed at the Christian Democratic party which

Correction: In the June 4, 1982 issue, David Burrell ("Israel's Scandalous Course") was mistakenly identified as rector of the Ecumenical Institute (Tantur) in Jerusalem, a position he no longer holds. Father Burrell, on leave from Notre Dame University, is currently studying Jewish and Islamic philosophy in Jerusalem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the terrorists identified with the government and the state subservient to "multinational imperialists."

- Many acts of violence during the Moro imprisonment were not orchestrated by the Brigadists but were spontaneous, demonstrating the dangerous degree of support the terrorists had obtained.
- The Brigadists had contacts with terrorists in other countries, but the organization was Italian-run and financed through kidnappings and robberies.
- Lawyers visiting terrorists in prison took messages outside to still-active terrorists.
- There was resentment against the physicist Franco Piperno and other leftist intellectuals who tried to move in at the top of the organization without an apprenticeship of violence.

These are details. The trial, in Judge Santiapichi's words to Savasta, is to help us understand why so many died, why there were so many victims. And why there are still so many: the relatives of those killed by the Brigadists who even in court must hear the arrogance of the hardliners; the terrorists' relatives among the public, waiting for a wave from their son or daughter; those terrorists still trapped in their Marxist-Leninist-sociological verbal prison.

Patrizio Peci acknowledges that the Brigadists have had a political-military defeat. But have they also seen their ideology as unreal and antihuman? Some are awakening to their humanity: in mid-June, five of the accused renounced terrorism although refusing to give information on their former comrades. Perhaps they had in mind Peci's words about sharing cells with hardliners. DESMOND O'GRADY

(Desmond O'Grady is an Australian novelist, dramatist, short-story writer, and journalist living in Rome.)

Milwaukee meeting

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE

SHUNNED BY THE MAINSTREAM

THE MEETING in Milwaukee last month was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a typical feminist conference. Mary Ledbetter of Nebraska, alluding to the belief that it is better to have abortion than child abuse, remarked that "we don't advocate taking new brides out and killing them to prevent them from becoming battered wives." Mary Ann Schaefer of Illinois referred to "abortion-favoring feminism" and said, "I sometimes call it 'terrorist feminism' because it reminds me of a terrorist activity; you have to be willing to kill for the cause you believe in."

It was the first national meeting of Feminists for Life of America, a small but spirited group of women (and men) who believe they can be feminists and pro-lifers at the same time. The organization was started ten years ago by two women who supported the Equal Rights Amendment and opposed abortion. One of them, Pat Goltz, was later "excommunicated" from the National Organization for Women because of her public advocacy of pro-life views.

The hostility of mainstream feminists, plus lack of money and staff, have kept Feminists for Life (FFL) low in numbers. The group is so loosely organized that there is no unified membership list, but optimists think it may have as many as a thousand members in the various chapters. It is strongest in the Midwest, especially in Wisconsin (national headquarters are at 1503 North 47th St., Milwaukee 53208) and Minnesota. The sixty to seventy people who attended the Milwaukee convention were mostly Midwesterners, though a few came from the East and one from California. About a dozen of the participants were men.

The Milwaukee meeting took place on June 4-6, just weeks before the long-foreseen failure of the Equal Rights Amendment. Members of Feminists for Life think that the ERA failed partly because it became identified — wrongly, they believe — with legalized abortion.

Because they are small in numbers, have no paid staff, and are ignored by the mass media, the pro-life feminists are little more than a small thorn in the side of mainstream feminism. But they suspect that they can attract many Americans who are alienated by more militant forms of feminism. They may be right.

Their brand of feminism rejects violence of all kinds, including the violence of abortion. It has plenty of room for children, who were much in evidence at the Milwaukee meeting. It insists on equal rights for women and shares the major concerns of other feminist groups. The Milwaukee conference, for example, included workshops on "Women in Politics," "Battered Women," "Women in Prison," "Employment Discrimination" and "The Female and Liturgy." But it also covered "Adoption," "Infanticide and Euthanasia," "Child Abuse and Neglect" and "Constitutional Issues of the Unborn."

The personal witness given at a Friday-night "group sharing" was in many ways more interesting than the formal sessions. Participants indicated that they understood the painful ambivalence many women have toward abortion. Some had gone through it themselves when faced with their own "hard cases."

One woman described how she had once been "pro-choice," but eventually reached a position of opposition to abortion. But then, she said wryly, "I became pregnant and . . . seriously reconsidered my position on abortion and thought maybe there was a good reason why I should have one, since I certainly didn't want to be pregnant." In the end she just couldn't find the reason she was looking for, "so I had a child that I released for adoption." She said she "learned a lot from that experience," including the fact that "the people on the other side aren't our enemies."

Another conference participant said that she, too, had favored legalized abortion. But she asked a pro-life group for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

information and received the "famous color pictures of abortion. . . . And that blew my mind. Because, college graduate that I was, I still subscribed to the blob-of-cells theory." Later her parents and a thirteen-year-old brother were killed in an accident, "and something just clicked in my head: No more carnage."

Another woman, a registered nurse, said that she used to be pro-abortion, but was influenced by working in one of the first intensive-care units for infants. "They fight *so hard* to stay alive. I wish everyone could see that — how much a tiny, one-pound infant fights to stay alive — how you think they've died and they've given their last gasp, and their heart starts beating again and they start breathing again." Eventually she became a volunteer for Birthright, which assists women with problem pregnancies.

Another woman had been raped: "I don't know how many of you share that experience. But if you sit there and wonder if you're going to be pregnant and do not want to be pregnant, it's very painful." She did not become pregnant; nor did she conclude that rape justifies abortion. She described a college student who had come to her about a problem pregnancy: "And she was a dancer . . . her body was her profession. But all I could say was, 'It's only six months. All you've got to do—that's all you've got to do. Someone will take that child.' And I was ready to say, 'God, it'll be me, if no one else.' "

Some agreed with the woman who said that "I was born a feminist, and I was also born a pro-lifer." Two women had special reasons for identifying with the unborn. One noted that "I was born with spina bifida." (When spina bifida, or cleft spine, is detected through amniocentesis today, the affected child is usually aborted.) Another explained that, in reading some pro-abortion literature, she came across the statement that "no unwanted child should be born." She had been adopted, and her reaction was, "Hey, that's me!"

Many of the women at the Milwaukee conference have children of their own, whom they treasure. But they do not view pregnancy and child-rearing through rose-tinted glasses. Some have been through difficult pregnancies, marital troubles, divorce. Nor are they naive about the problems of women in America. During the weekend, either in public sessions or private conversations, an observer could learn that one woman had been subjected to sexual abuse as a child and later had difficult bouts with alcohol and drugs. Another had been the victim of wife-beating. Another had been subjected to sexual harassment at work, as well as to rape. Several had been jailed.

No Pollyannas there. Their affirmation of life was all the more impressive because they had seen it at its worst, yet still thought its best was worth having.

It is difficult for FFL members to discuss the abortion issue with pro-choice feminists, because the latter seem to feel threatened by *any* kind of pro-life group. When a young woman named Susan Maronek tried to obtain a charter for an FFL group at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she encountered enormous resistance from student government leaders. They were adamant in saying that one could not be a feminist and a pro-lifer at the same time.

Minnesota Feminists for Life last year tried to join a women's lobbying group, but was rejected because of its pro-life position. Later the Minnesota FFL tried to place an ad in the rally brochure of a "Take Back the Night" march. Its check and ad were returned with a note that said the FFL goals were inconsistent with those of the organizing group, Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW). The pro-life feminists responded that, "We don't know which goals WAVAW feels we're inconsistent with. They never asked us for a copy of our goals. Certainly, our letters to them have offered nothing but support." They added, "We will not have an ad in the program book and we will not march under our own banner (we've been warned that our banner would provoke violence against women—us). But we support the Take Back the Night march because the cause is just."

Some participants in the Milwaukee conference described their experience of being "shunned" by mainstream feminists. Ingrid Smith, who ran as a peace/pro-life candidate in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1980, was told by a woman lawyer, "Listen: We feminists in Ann Arbor are well-trained. We wouldn't vote for you if you were running for dogcatcher."

Maggie Guenther, a former national president of Feminists for Life, had a message for feminists who support abortion: "Look — You're my sister. You're like me. You're my kin — not just because you're a woman, but because you see injustice and you want to do something about it. Can't we embrace? Can't we hold hands and see what we can do on this, where we agree?" But she said that there is seldom a positive response to this plea; instead, "you find people turning their backs."

Where do Feminists for Life go from here? FFL member Gail Grenier Sweet is putting together an anthology of pro-life feminist writing that should help keep the conscience keen. And there will be another national FFL gathering next June in Omaha. Individually, they will keep working for women's rights and for the right to life. Collectively, the answer is less certain. With no paid staff and no organizers in the field, it seems doubtful that the group can grow very fast or go very far.

Another group, younger but more visible than Feminists for Life, provides a good model for growth. This is Prolifers for Survival, a peace/pro-life group founded by FFL member Juli Loesch three years ago. Loesch built the group from a few friends to 1500 people through patient, full-time, live-off-the-land organizing. Because so many of her members are activists ("have picket sign and sleeping bag, will travel"), they have impact far beyond their numbers.

If Feminists for Life can scrape together enough money to put a full-time organizer in the field, they can test their theory that there are many other pro-life feminists out in the countryside, waiting to be tapped.

If they cannot do that, they can still serve as the little thorn in the side, the leavening, or perhaps the conscience—choose your own metaphor—of mainstream feminism.

MARY MEEHAN

(Mary Meehan has written on abortion and politics for The National Catholic Reporter, Commonweal, The Progressive, *and other journals.)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

THE 12TH OF JUNE

LESSONS FOR A YOUNG MOVEMENT

THE 12TH OF JUNE was a perfect day for a demonstration—no threat of rain, but not sunny either. Marching in the sun is hot, nasty work. Everybody gets thirsty, and than everybody gets sweaty, and finally everybody gets restless, irritable, and impatient to go home. It was sunny the day of the big demonstration in Washington in May, 1970, a couple of days after the kids were killed at Kent State. I remember a line at a drinking fountain an hour long. Imagine standing in line for an hour for a drink of water! The marchers on the 12th of June were spared anything like that.

For three years beginning in the fall of 1967 I covered a lot of demonstrations as a reporter for UPI. The stories were hard to write because either too little happened or too much happened without rhyme or reason. You might define a demonstration as a gathering of many people to hear a speech they would never think of reading. A great deal of politicking is involved in deciding who gets to speak. It's the crowd, not the demonstration committee, which ultimately pays the old debts by standing there listening to someone of whom they have only dimly heard shouting strong words on a subject in which they are only faintly interested. Covering demonstrations is a lot easier than marching in them because you get to come and go as you please, and hang around the speaker's platform, and push up close to the violence—and crowd violence, back in the 60s, was like the threat of a wreck at a road race—without running much risk of arrest or injury. I liked covering demonstrations because I got to see people I hadn't seen since the *last* demonstration, and because there was always plenty of time to stand around and argue the issues with people of strong or deeply felt or naive or eccentric views.

At its heart a demonstration is a simple thing. It reveals a willingness to intervene. Most people in most places are unwilling to intervene because they think it will be futile or dangerous. It's quite an undertaking to convince ordinary citizens they have something to contribute to large public issues. Back in the 1950s, when concern was beginning to run high about nuclear weapons-testing, it was a considerable feat to get 5000 people in the same place at the same time. In April, 1965, a demonstration against the war in Vietnam in Washington brought out 25,000 people and was considered a rousing success. A year or two later a hundred thousand was getting to be routine. The Moratorium in September, 1969, brought out several hundred thousand, and the May, 1970, demonstration was a half million or more. The June 12th demonstration was arguably the biggest in American history, at least half a million, perhaps even 750,000, possibly more. I don't think anyone has seriously tried to count with exactitude, and I'm not sure it would matter if we really knew. The important thing was its general size—too big for any political leader, much less a president mulling reelection, to ignore—and the fact it came out of nowhere. Six months ago there was no whisper of the magnitude of public feeling on this issue, which I take to be a visceral conclusion that nothing can justify not just the fact of nuclear war—the woolliest strategists in the think tanks accept that—but the risk and even the threat of nuclear war. People are not afraid of the Russians, but of what fear of the Russians seems to be pushing us towards.

So it is no longer a question whether a popular movement can be organized around this issue. The movement is already there, and it is amazingly sophisticated. We might even say the 1960s constituted a kind of dry run for this more fundamental, and much more difficult struggle to interrupt the drift of recent history. I marched as part of a local church group. Before joining the main march we attended a rally at the Presbyterian Church on Park Avenue and 64th Street. It is customary at such rallies to recognize groups from faraway places. A round of applause followed the name of each state—Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oklahoma, California, Alaska. Imagine! Alaska! A group of people came all the way from Alaska to walk up Fifth Avenue and scuff their feet in the dust of the Great Lawn of Central Park—lawn in name only—and listen to the weird echo of the speakers over the sound system. That really showed something.

Sitting there, I remembered an image of Richard Nixon behind a pile of letters and telegrams on his desk in the Oval Office—demonstrations of support for his policy on Vietnam. This was shortly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

before the Moratorium, which brought out twice as many people in the actual flesh as mere letters and telegrams elicited by Nixon's television appeal. What does it take to write a letter? A couple of minutes? What did that piddling response demonstrate? That Nixon was practically naked of support. It was the same on June 12th. Hundreds of thousands of people voted with their feet, with their time, and with their money. The group from Alaska demonstrated their willingness to intervene in the most convincing possible manner. Reagan's political advisors, if not Reagan himself, will be asking themselves what else all those who marched on June 12th will be willing to do?

Now comes the hard part. The movement—it is still too young to have acquired a name—has no program, and the problem has no obvious solution. Deciding what to do about the war in Vietnam was easy by comparison. The opposition wanted an end to the war and didn't much care how it came about. The threat of nuclear war presents a knottier problem because it is inseparable from the threat of war itself. We can't simply walk away from it, as we did, in the end, from Vietnam. This suggests that the new movement will have to make up its program as it goes along with only the most general sort of goals as North Star—a steady easing of the military rivalry of the United States and the Soviet Union, a shift away from nuclear threat as the basis of military policy, attempts to find arenas other than the battlefield for the settlement of conflict, absolute reductions in the number of nuclear weapons ready to fire on the opening day of a big general war. All of these will be difficult to achieve. None would free us from the danger posed by nuclear weapons. In dealing with them the new movement will have to be inventive, persistent, clear-headed, forbearing, and patient. The history of the old movement against the war in Vietnam suggests four principles which might help the new movement to focus its efforts and ease the acrimony inevitable when any large group of people want roughly the same thing without knowing how to get it.

(1) *If the solution were easy, there wouldn't be a problem.* American military programs are highly visible and politically accessible. The Soviets' are harder to reach. The new movement will find it difficult to see beyond the Pentagon, and yet the threat of war is something the United States and the Soviet Union must address together. Unilateral moves which get only a feeble response from the other side, or no response at all, will simply set the stage for a reaction.

(2) *If it's not their fault, then it's not our fault either.* War is the oldest of human problems. Each war comes with its peculiar historical context, but the context only sets the stage for war without explaining it. The United States and the Soviet Union have both had their moments of foolishness and their moments of wisdom since 1945. The new movement will find it easy to be generous with the Russians, harder to be generous with ourselves. But any tendency to put the sole blame on us will only spur the opposition while obscuring the importance of a Soviet-American attempt to ease the problem together.

(3) *The guys who got us into it, are the guys who must get us out of it.* As a practical matter the new movement cannot frogmarch the chiefs of staff, National Security Council staffers and think-tank strategists out of public life. They have built the sort of military machine we have, and they are the ones who must alter or even dismantle it. This is a task for political persuasion and argument, not a purge. Despite much press to the contrary, the defense community has no appetite for nuclear war. The occasional wild man finds his way into a position of responsibility, but most defense people would be as alarmed at the prospect of nuclear war as the tenderest mother with babe in arms. They have built so many nuclear weapons because they can't think what else to do. The new movement's job is to send them back to the drawing board.

(4) *Everything works; nothing works enough.* It is a characteristic of movements to think success would be automatic if everybody only signed on to a common program. This is a chimera. A big movement is bound to try many things at once. Some will work better than others, but it's hard to say which in advance. It is the total effort which counts by changing the political climate. The June 12th demonstration was made by hundreds of groups from as many places. If they go on working back home, content with a common goal in the absence of a common program, then the world may look very different in a year or two. It's hard to see what else might do the trick. THOMAS POWERS

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

EASY ATHEISM

MIXING GOOD POINTS & SILLY ONES

THERE IS an article in the July *Harper's* called "The Lord and the Intellectuals" which mixes some good points with some silly ones. Its appearance reveals something important about this moment in cultural history.

Christopher Hitchens, the author, finds atheism "morally superior, as well as intellectually superior, to religion." Like most atheists, he believes he knows what belief is all about (unlike believers, who don't presume to know those heights and depths). It means a surrender of reason, a "foul squabble for primacy in Daddy's affections."

Hitchens quotes Innocent III's advice to Simon de Montfort, when asked how he could distinguish between Albigensian heretics and Catholics; the pope allegedly replied, "Kill them all. God will know his own." Hitchens goes on to say, "Whether the liberated Catholics of today, and the non-Catholic admirers of the present pope, like it or not, there would have been no papacy without that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

directive." This is historically a very foolish statement; no historian has argued that the papacy turned on that moment in medieval history, and would not have survived without the massacre of the Cathars.

If all Hitchens is saying is that popes who call for murder are doing something hideous and morally indefensible, he is saying nothing I didn't learn in Catholic schools, and he is saying it in a way which is so sloppy as to be dishonest. His atheism is an easily-won variety: "Since it is obviously inconceivable that all religions can be right, the most reasonable conclusion is that they are all wrong." But this is plausible only if each religion claims that it alone has any truth, and that all other religions are absolutely false. There are extreme fundamentalists who may claim something like this, but there are many more people who are impressed by the remarkable unanimity of the great religious traditions on a number of ethical issues and, perhaps more impressively, about the nature of religious experience, a phenomenon which precedes ethics. (C.S. Lewis does a nice job of detailing some of this consensus in *The Abolition of Man*.) For atheism worth getting your teeth into, you'll have to turn to someone like Jacques Monod, whose *Chance and Necessity* is interesting.

But Hitchens makes some good points. He finds it funny that columnist George Will, philosopher William Barrett, and *Washington Monthly* editor Charles Peters, among others, all have sympathetic views of religion but seem unwilling to buy into any orthodox religious view or, indeed, any coherent one. Religion is good for the masses because it firms up their commitment to important values, values which are good for the body politic.

Hitchens quotes Gibbon: the religions of the declining Roman Empire "were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosophers as equally false; and by the magistrates as equally useful." According to Hitchens, "today's policy intellectuals, or philosopher-magistrates, hold the last two views simultaneously." I am not sure that all of the people quoted have quite the arms-length view of religion which is attributed to them, but the point is a good one. The phenomenon is not new. Some supporters of *Aciton Française* pushed its Catholic variety of fascism not because they believed in Catholic doctrine—they didn't—but because this program seemed the best way to assure the survival of what they regarded as the best European values.

The use of religion for reasons of state goes back to Julian the Apostate's attempt to revive paganism for the sake of the Empire, and probably goes back even farther than that. Its recent, more banal incarnation is found in such horrors as presidential and gubernatorial prayer breakfasts and senate chaplains. Religion is acknowledged by our leaders as something which contributes its little bit to society, a facet of life just as important as business, education, or athletics; it is a pursuit worthy of a well-rounded citizen.

Too many religious people have been pathetically eager to buy into this argument: see what we contribute to society as a whole, whether you agree with us or not. (This is like the skinny kid who tries to persuade the school bully that he can at least help him out with his math.) Hitchens finds this form of religion harmful to society; I find it harmful to religion.

Any coziness between religion and power is dangerous. The state is able to pretend that it has a divine sanction, and religion becomes a means to what is tacitly admitted to be a larger end: the success of the state. When religion becomes a part of life, separate from other parts, it becomes false, and the God the religious person says that he reverences becomes a godling, something safe and malleable. Where religious leaders have grown comfortable with power or, worse, have come to pursue it, terrible things have resulted—precisely the things which opponents of religion are able to point to as the results of religion itself; and it doesn't do to argue too easily that this is simply the corruption of *real* religion.

Religion can claim some moral successes in the social realm, ranging from the foundation of the first hospitals to the earliest opposition to slavery, opposition to the most cruel forms of punishment, and opposition to the scourge of modern warfare with its slaughter of civilian populations. But people claiming religious warrant for their views were also to be found on the side of slavers and warriors, and they were usually allied with the powerful economic and political forces of their time.

Hitchens is not quite negative enough. He opposes "the totalitarian temptation" and goes on to say that "the desire to worship and obey is the problem—the object of adoration is a secondary issue. Professedly godless men have shown themselves capable of great crimes. But they have not invented any that they did not learn from the religious, and so they find themselves heaping up new 'infallible' icons and idols. Stalinism, which was actually Stalin worship, could not have occurred in a country that had not endured several centuries of the divine right of kings. It is the religious *mentality* that has to be combatted."

When George Orwell reviewed Karl Adam's *The Spirit of Catholicism* he said that Adam hurried by the problem of evil like a man hurrying past his creditor's doorway. There is a similar scuffle here: Hitchens dashes past the fact that more people have been murdered in our century, at the hands of professed atheists, than ever before, for any reason, including religion. It isn't enough to say that they learned all this from religious folk. The lesson to be learned is even more depressing than the one Hitchens wants to teach us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is something about human beings which will use anything at all—religion, politics, or a disagreement over interior decoration—as an excuse to dominate, and if dominance must be forced to the point of murder any and all reasons will be pressed into service to justify it. Most pre-modern cultures were religious, in some way, and most cultures in human history have been bloody on a great many occasions. Modern society has been more murderous than any, and is professedly non-religious. Murderousness can't be blamed as much on religion or irreligion (though with as little evidence as Hitchens has I could point to the greater number of dead and blame the latter) as on something constant and ugly in humanity, which uses whatever excuses it can come up with to justify any atrocity.

Where Hitchens and his ilk (how many people are there in an ilk?) are absolutely right is in their passionate belief that any system of thought which asks for unquestioning allegiance is dangerous, and it does not much matter whether it calls itself "religion" or not. There is a totalitarian temptation which will use anything to achieve its ends, and its success is assured wherever there are enough people who yearn for systems or charismatic leaders who will offer us all the answers to all of our questions. There is very little difference between the passionate socialist and the fundamentalist, the people who mourn Kennedy's Camelot and the followers of Jim Jones. (Given the Bay of Pigs and Vietnam it could be argued that following Jim Jones was less lethal.) Anyone who claims infallibility ought to be distrusted; and the need to be led is neurotic.

Obedience, Simone Weil wrote, is a need of the soul. But this is not the same thing as a need to be led; atheists fail to see that profound reverence—the emotion a person experiences before the unknown, a prelude to investigation as well as worship—and the need to seek the will of God are not the same as a refusal to reason and a need to be led. To love anyone obliges us, and self-sacrifice and obedience follow from love. Obedience is not a surrender of reason, but a surrender of self-interest and the protection of the ego, for the sake of a larger life.

I said that the *Harper's* article reveals something important about this time. What I mean is that it comes at a time when the heritage of the Enlightenment is as questioned as the *ancien régime* ever was. The questioning has become explicit: George Steiner has pointed out that the Enlightenment faith in the power of reason and education was dealt a fatal blow when the most educated and cultural civilization in history produced Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

The Enlightenment marked the end of the mix of religious and civic interests which had ruled society in varying forms for centuries; now the secular consensus which began with the Enlightenment is itself coming to an end. If religion was the opium of the people, nationalism replaced it, and then ideology. It is not easy to see from here what new form the totalitarian temptation will take. It could take the form of a surrender to the experts, a faith in technology and the unchangeable sway of those who claim to have the facts—in other words, an abuse of the love of reason, a love which can become as idolatrous as any.

The charism of the state, the binding authority of the fatherland, won't work anymore. During the war in Vietnam, when it became apparent that appeals to simple patriotism wouldn't work, our leaders were fond of saying that they had facts about the war and the enemy threat that the rest of us didn't have: this was a reason to trust them. Reagan has made the same argument recently with regard to the arms race. I don't think people are buying it, but this is not the sort of argument a Kaiser Wilhelm, or for that matter a Hitler or a Roosevelt, would have found it necessary to make.

Dogmatic atheists and strict fundamentalists work from opposite ends of the same wavelength. Their passions seem to have less to do with religion than with the condition of the culture: both ask, who is to blame for the way we are? Both find easy answers to the question, and bear a similar witness. Atheists fear that there will be a resurgence of the sort of religious power which died with the Enlightenment, and fundamentalists fear the triumph of the secular humanism which was born there. Both camps are a little desperate right now, and their rhetoric shows it. Maybe both sense that neither will win. It is more comfortable to think that your enemy will win than to imagine that you might be faced with something genuinely new, something unknown. The depressing fact is that there will be religious people and atheists who will try to appropriate the next form of authority, whatever it is.

JOHN GARVEY

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

FRUIT OF THEIR YEARS

WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGING

IT HAD ESCAPED my attention, and perhaps that of many readers, that the United Nations has designated 1982 as the year for the World Assembly on Aging. My first notice of it was in a news story telling of the pope's message on World Communications Day in which he used the approach of the Assembly to plead the cause of the world's elderly and urged that governments and enterprises everywhere see that adequate pensions allow them to live out their lives in dignity. So this was the reason for the spate of articles and surveys on the aging which have appeared lately! The press prepares, and none too soon for the Assembly which will convene in Vienna on July 26.

The statistics on the aging have altered so drastically in this century and have altered in such rapid stages that researchers warn that the statistics they publish, because they are based on a population count five years old, may have changed even as they worked on them. (The average life span of 73 years may be higher

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now, they warn.) In the United States people over 65 are 12 percent of the population; if present population trends continue they will be 20 percent of the population within a generation. People are living so much longer, and living so much longer in active good health, that the elderly are now designated as "young elderly" and "frail elderly." The latter stage seems to begin in the 70s and to extend into the 80s and beyond, although there seem to be an amazing number of hale and hearty 80-year-olds living very active lives.

The elderly are now a political force. Organizations like the Gray Panthers, the American Association of Retired Persons, and the Older Women's League organize and direct their voting power and are ignored by candidates and office-holders at their peril. "It's wonderful," said an eighty-year-old who has been an activist in many causes, "I move around the country visiting my children and it's never hard to get acquainted—there are always lobbying groups of oldsters to join."

On the other hand a young doctor tells me that in the public and veterans' hospitals in which he has served it is not uncommon to see patients who are old, worn-out, failing in health and mind in their fifties and sixties. This is only one indication that people are on different calenders of aging. Life span differs dramatically depending on whether people live their lives in affluent or poor countries, whether in Europe and the United States or in South and Central America, for example. (We have seen in the news of late so many pictures of men and women gnarled and old in their forties!) But life span differs dramatically in this country too, and seems to be affected by such variables as economic status, state or region of residence, and physical heritage. People live longer in two such different states as Hawaii and Minnesota—longer than in any other state in the Union—and theories conflict as to the reason.

Life span, however, is probably of less concern to the aging than is the quality of that life span. Economic security is of primary concern, of course, and this John Paul II recognized in stressing the obligation of all societies to provide adequate pensions. He struck a more throbbing nerve when he adjured his audience to hold the elderly in reverence and respect and reminded them that Scripture describes old age as a time of fulfillment when man and woman can rest from their labors surrounded by family, enjoying the fruit of their years.

Perhaps the pope's mental image is of a family in a more simple and pastoral setting, a family more rooted and geographically united than in the American reality, but there are many ways of enjoying the fruit of one's years centered in one's family, even if not under the same roof. Whatever the difference in circumstance may be, the psychological needs the pope addresses are the same. The nagging fear with which the elderly live is that of abandonment and isolation in a nursing home, their daily experience that of being treated as less than full human beings, with neither reverence nor respect. Fortunately, there is a growing literature of the aging experience in this country. It includes works of fiction which enable us to understand what the elderly feel.

"We never felt we sacrificed for the children, even when we did. But they were always the children, we the adults. For a few brief years we were all on a plateau of friendship; we were equals. Now suddenly the children are in charge. They are the parents and I am the child . . ."

This point of crisis, a crisis which has become a common experience, has been reached in the life of Margaret Masterson, the protagonist in a new book with the deceptive title, *We Were Once Beautiful Butterflies* (Zebra Books). She sits at the top of the stairs listening as her children discuss putting her in a home. "They were talking about her not as a person but as nuisance, a problem to be solved."

Maria Kavanagh, the author, has used a creative way of communicating the discoveries she made and the conclusions she reached as a member of the Catholic Charities' Committee on the Aging in the Washington archdiocese. She illuminates one aspect after the other of our failure with the aging by means of her fiction—and has written an absorbing book in the process. Margaret Masterson is the victim of a common medical mistake, the misdiagnosis of a treatable physical problem as senility. Consigned to a nursing home, she suffers the indignities caused by practices meant more to control than to heal.

She suffers also the diminishment in self-esteem caused by the well-meant but insensitive ministrations of visitors and volunteers. (There is one blackly comic incident which would be hilarious if it were not also so painful. A blue-haired and bulging woman in a tight sailor hat is in charge of the residents of Valley View on a bus trip to Annapolis. She provides them with children's sailor hats, insists that they put them on before she allows the bus to start, and leads them in communal singing: "From the back of the bus came Evelyn's shrill voice. 'Attention, everyone, Everyone! Come, let's all sing.' She began, 'Anchors aweigh, my boys. Anchors aweigh.' " And so the day goes on, a series of small humiliations endured by the residents of Valley View only because almost anything is better than the monotony of everyday.)

Positive themes in the life of the aging are also explored in this book. There is the special relationship which can exist between grandparent and grandchild—a relationship of which many children and elders are robbed by time and distance these days. There is the possibility of new and lasting friendships and supportive relationships which the elderly can forge among themselves.

All in all, in Maria Kavanagh's observation, professional agencies and specialists do not come off very well. Perhaps the problem is that, as one gerontology student put it to me recently, the average younger adult does not really know any older people as persons and friends. Kavanagh's story has a happy ending. Feisty Margaret Masterson is able to take control of her own life again. Still the reader knows that Margaret Mastersons are rare. The pope's plea demands our serious response. We are all responsible for the elderly in our families. We cannot leave things to the experts—who may not be experts, after all.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LIFE AFTER DOOMSDAY

Armageddon in triplicate

DAVID C. MORRISON

HAVING ONCE AGAIN sown the anti-nuclear wind with a seven-year, $4.2 billion proposal for evacuating 319 urban target areas in the event of threatened nuclear attack, the Reagan administration is now reaping an outraged whirlwind. Yet, despite the storm of scathing editorials, city council resolutions and Congressional hearings that have accompanied this latest eruption of the decades-old civil defense debate, there has been surprisingly little discussion of the elaborate programs already developed for protecting the American citizenry from the awesome destructive force of "NUDETS," Federal Emergency Management Agency jargon for nuclear detonations.

While our attention is focused on the budget battle in Washington, the states, charged with formulating the nuts-and-bolts civil defense programs, continue to quietly spend FEMA funds — $128 million this year — planning for life after Doomsday. New York State's survival program is widely considered among the most advanced in the country, though it is typical of those that will be pursued with a renewed vigor in other states if Reagan wins approval of his $4.2 billion get-out-of-town scheme.

The broad scope of the state's planned response to nuclear attack, as developed by the Office of Disaster Preparedness in Albany, is outlined in its "Emergency Operations Plan." This fat document, complete with 15 annexes, illustrates touchingly the age-old bureaucratic yen to contain even the most unimaginable chaos within a sturdy thicket of red tape.

Along with fallout, the apocalypse will generate a blizzard of paper work. As Soviet warheads rain down on New York's ten "High Risk Areas," agents of the radiological Intelligence Section are to file "Weapons Effects Reports," or WERS, describing "date and time of detonation, flash-to-bang time, illumination time, true asimuth to cloud stem," and so on. Striking a rare note of realism, the plan does concede that "it is unlikely that any one observer will be able to report all of the above elements of information."

Once at least two WERS have been compiled on a single explosion, a "NUDET Report" must then be assembled and logged on "Form Rad-5B." "Fallout Arrival Reports" will be filed by monitoring stations as the outside exposure rate approaches .5 rems per hour. Local requests for aerial radiological survey missions are to be issued on "the multiple copy version of Form Rad-2B and CAP NWY Form 20."

This resolute insistence on a tidy Armageddon surfaces again later in the plan with the admonition that, during enemy attack, cars "be parked in an orderly manner" in the lots near the New York State Alternate Seat of Government. This two-story underground bunker — sited, appropriately enough, beneath the Public Security Building — was built in 1963 by former Governor and civil defense buff Nelson Rockefeller. Designed to withstand a five-megaton burst one-and-a-half miles off, the ASG will house up to 700 state officials and their immediate families for the first two weeks of World War III.

This subterranean government will have run of the latest amenities of the nuclear age, from a walk-in freezer that doubles as a temporary morgue to toilets fitted with special rubber gaskets to keep nearby NUDETS from rocking them off their bases. The operation room's antennae are fine-tuned to pick up reports from regional outposts and keep in touch with what's left of the federal government hunkered in its own bunker under Mount Weather in Virginia. If all this sounds familiar, those who caught Jack Smight's 1977 post-attack turkey, *Damnation Alley*, may recall that the only signal George Peppard and his band of California survivors could raise came from Albany.

WHILE THE CIVIL SERVICE shuffles its Rad-5B forms beneath Albany, their constituents will be streaming out of the imperiled cities into rural "Host Areas." In 1980, Plattsburgh, a northern city near a SAC base, became the first target in New York with a finalized Crisis Relocation Plan. As a model project, Plattsburgh's phone book contains four pages of detailed evacuation instructions, as does a supplemental eight-page, tabloid-format flyer.

DAVID C. MORRISON *is a New York-based writer specializing in many aspects of the civil defense issue. This is his first appearance in* Commonweal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"If nuclear attack occurs," reads the text on its cover, "all persons living in this high risk area must evacuate when ordered." Inside, pet owners are asked to "leave them at home, preferably in the basement with a two-week supply of water and food." On the back are alphabetical ID tags which, clipped and pasted to windshields, allow state troopers to channel evacuees into their designated escape routes.

"This is the most serious crisis our country has ever faced," the section addressed to host area readers gravely announced. "As a resident of the Host Area you can help save the lives of your neighbors from Plattsburgh and nearby towns who have left their homes to seek safety here." A list of telephone numbers follows, to be called if you want "to share your basement."

The Utica/Rome planning district, surrounding Griffiss SAC base where the cruise missiles rolling off Boeing's assembly line are being stockpiled, also has an operationa CRP, as will Buffalo and Albany by the end of this year. The fly in the ointment, as always, is New York City. At current funding levels, planners despair of devising a workable scheme within this decade for moving close to ten million New Yorkers up to their Catskills refuge.

The city's civil defenders got a long leg up, however, from the Stanford Research Institute, hired by the federal government in 1978 to work up a model evacuation scenario. The California think-tankers decided the job could be done in a mere 3.5 days by packing privately-owned cars and cramming everyone else onto buses, commuter trains, commandeered airliners and river boats. They also had 300,000 Manhattanites jumping freight trains in Hoboken, an idea with unpleasant historical associations that was abandoned only after Conrail noted that, since modern box cars are airtight, such an evacuation solution would unavoidably be a final one.

Having checked into their "Congregate Care Facilities" upstate, New York refugees — ever mindful of the civil defense slogan: "Radiation protection is as cheap as dirt" — will then set about digging their way to survival. State planners, reassured by a 1977 Federal test run, have every confidence that "average Americans" are up to moving the tons of earth needed for even the most hastily thrown-together shelter. Four dozen families were given rough diagrams and paid several hundred dollars, plus a bonus for rapid completion, to build "expedient shelters." Much to the officials' surprise and gratification, not one family dropped out of the program and, in fact, all earned their bonuses.

Nor are planners worried about miscalculating the unpredictable intensity of the radiation that will waft on prevailing winds from the shattered cities and silos to the west to blanket upstate New York. Even now, the National Weather Service projects "downwind fallout forecasts" from high altitude wind velocities, feeding them twice daily to all state civil defense headquarters.

AFTER FALLOUT PROTECTION, an assured food supply is the first imperative for a region so agriculturally isolated that the threat of even a truckers' strike—much less a nuclear strike—is enough to send shivers of apprehension down the spines of planners. A tough nut, to be sure, but one the New York State Crisis Relocation Food Emergency Planning Committee is working to crack. Meeting quarterly in Albany, representatives from the state government, academia, the trucking industry and such food chains as Grand Union and Price Chopper are studying the transportation, storage and nutrition components of a plan to reallocate groceries from their warehouses directly to the host areas.

As throughout the New York civil defense establishment, these planners take their work dead seriously. The Grand Union delegate to the food committee, for instance, is confident of the plan's eventual workability, though she does fret about the logistic complexities involved. "I just hope we have an operational plan in place before the Soviets attack," she says.

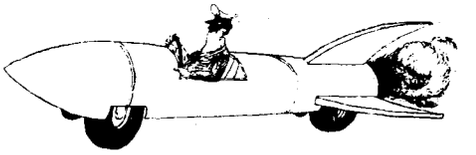
The Grand Union planner and her colleagues may be in for a cruel disappointment. On June 9 the New York City Council joined scores of other city councils around the country in saying, "Hell, no, we won't go." Voting 35 to 5, the New York body derided the Reagan get-out-of-town scheme as "voodoo preparedness" and declined any federal funding for civil defense.

Other localities, however, are less inclined to go gently into that good, nuclear night. Last October, the Bonneville County Civil Defense office staged a three-hour trial exercise, code named Vulcan's Forge, involving fifty agencies and more than 1,000 people who simulated blast and radiation victims. Vulcan's Forge was the brain child of Idaho Falls' CD chief, Captain T.J. Wadsworth, a retired naval reserve officer with a keen appreciation of the Soviet threat.

Wadsworth's 96-page exercise scenario begins with the entire Minuteman missile force being vaporized in its silos and ends with Soviet fifth columnists emptying vials of Dioxin and mycotoxins into the Ririe Dam. All dialogue in the scenario was scripted by Wadsworth, as when a "hippie"—played by a local Eagle Scout—walked into the civil defense office and announced, "I saw a reactor blow up west of here at 6:50!" Reading his own lines, Wadsworth shot back, "Reactors don't blow up! Soviet thermonuclear weapons do! You people have been barking up the wrong tree for a long time!"

Tempting as it is to lampoon Captain Wadsworth and his colleagues in New York and other states as demented Strangeloves, their nuclear survival fantasies are shared by too many policymakers at the highest levels to be dismissed out of hand. Local civil defense planners may be rehearsing a dance of death, but Washington pays the piper.

The resolute Captain Wadsworth could be speaking from the Oval Office when he writes, as he does in the letter of transmittal accompanying the Vulcan's Forge transcript, "Our position is that the United States must perceive and address nuclear war as 'thinkable' and structure our strategic force levels and Civil Defense accordingly."



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SECRET REPORT ON DISCRIMINATION IN ULSTER

Keeping Catholics in their place

DAVID R. LOWRY

A SECRET REPORT on job discrimination in Northern Ireland was leaked recently to the *Irish Times*. This report confirms the view of close observers of discrimination against Catholics that the British reform legislation of 1976 has not worked. The report was prepared by Dr. Christopher McCrudden, a law professor at Lincoln College of Oxford University, and he notes that British anti-discrimination law enforcement has "failed" and is "in need of a complete overhaul."

In 1976 the British government belatedly enacted the Fair Employment Act which was supposed to help eradicate discrimination in employment against Catholics in Northern Ireland. Job discrimination against Catholics had been a major cause of the civil rights unrest which preceded the current fighting. Since the establishment of the state of Northern Ireland in 1922, Catholics had been systematically and openly discriminated against. By depriving Catholics of equal opportunity, successive Unionist regimes calculated that Catholics would be deprived of income and forced to emigrate to earn a living. Because of this forced emigration Catholics would never constitute a majority within Northern Ireland. Thus discrimination was the cornerstone of Unionist political strategy.

Discrimination leading to emigration of Catholics was very successful. One survey shows that two-thirds of all emigrants from Northern Ireland were Catholic. In this way the electoral impact of the higher Catholic birthrate was negated. Unionists were assured of remaining in power in Northern Ireland, and the future of the state of Northern Ireland as an entity was secured. Systems of discrimination were, and still are, crucially important to the Unionists. If Catholics choose not to emigrate to find work, then one day in the future Catholics will constitute a numerical and hence electoral majority. When that day comes, it is thought that the demise of the state of Northern Ireland will not be far behind.

Successive Unionist governments never faltered on the issue of discrimination against Catholics. Even the relatively more enlightened regime of Captain Terence O'Neill in the late 1960s did not make any legislative or administrative move to undermine discriminatory practices. Thus when Britain assumed direct rule in 1972, everybody, both Catholic and Protestant, anxiously waited for a British initiative in the job discrimination area. Eventually Britain enacted a rather weak piece of legislation in 1976. Now it is clear to all that Britain's approach was ineffective. British legislation has neither improved the situation of Catholics nor diminished Protestant privilege and political hegemony.

The British Fair Employment Act of 1976 established the Fair Employment Agency (FEA) to monitor discrimination in employment. Regrettably the British did not give the FEA effective powers of enforcement. Instead the approach was one of "moral persuasion" by which discriminating employers would be "educated" and persuaded to change their ways. The FEA was never given proper prosecutorial power. How "moral persuasion" could be expected to be appropriate in the midst of entrenched and subtle discriminatory practices during an incipient civil war was never explained.

THE FEA did set about doing one of the few things that it was permitted to do—research. Reports compiled by the FEA since 1977 again and again confirm that Catholics are the victims of discrimination in all significant sectors of the Northern Irish economy. In 1980 an FEA study showed that the position of Catholics in relation to Protestants was worsening under British direct rule. Indeed, the 1980 FEA study conclusively demonstrated that the gap between Catholics and Protestants "was widening" and would worsen for the "foreseeable future." But while the FEA was toothless and unable to prevent discrimination, its research findings have added considerably to our understanding of the sheer depth and scope of discrimination against Catholics.

In August of 1977 the FEA decided to embark upon an investigation of skilled trades in Belfast's heavy engineering sector. This investigation has not yet been completed but parts of it have been leaked to the *Irish Times*. The FEA study confirms Ulster Catholics' worst fears.

Skilled trades are highly-paid, high-status occupations, and apprenticeships are much sought after. Skilled or "craft" unions have, during this century, been Protestant-dominated and, consequently, conspicuously silent on the issue of discrimination against Catholics. Northern unions largely reflect the aspirations of Protestant workers and have never taken a

DAVID R. LOWRY *teaches at Pace Law School in White Plains, New York. He is a former member of the Faculty of Law at Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

position of moral or political leadership. The FEA 1977 confidential investigation shows why this union complicity in discrimination is inevitable.

The FEA found that in the British government-owned Short Brothers aircraft manufacturing plant in Belfast only between 4.5 percent to 8 percent of skilled men are Catholic. Of over one thousand skilled workers at the Harland and Wolfe Shipyard there is not one skilled Catholic tradesman—a fact that did not stop the British government from recently giving Harland and Wolfe over $100 million to continue its operations of *both* shipbuilding and discrimination. At Standard Telephones only "six or seven" out of sixty-nine skilled workers were Catholic in March of 1980. At the Hugh Scott engineering works in Belfast the firm's workforce is 100 percent Protestant.

Interestingly, in the American-owned Hughes Tool Company plant in Belfast only seven of sixty craftsmen are Catholic. American corporations are seemingly content to engage in patently discriminatory practices which, if performed in the United States, would be manifestly illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. American law expressly forbids corporations from "perpetuating the present effects of past discrimination" in race, sex, *and* religion.

The FEA investigation of the state-owned utility, the Northern Ireland Electricity Service (NIES), is most revealing. Less than 10 percent of NIES engineers and only 12.6 percent of its administrative staff are Catholic. Of the 241 managerial staff at NIES "at least 91 percent" are Protestant. At the modern Ballylumford power station in Antrim only 3 percent of the engineers are Catholic, while at the Coolkeeragh power station in overwhelmingly Catholic Derry less than 25 percent of engineers are Catholic. When asked in 1981, the NIES refused to sign a declaration that henceforth it would pursue equal opportunity in hiring. The FEA's still confidential study of the NIES notes that Catholics are only found in any number in lower-grade jobs. The FEA concludes of the NIES that "all the information we have obtained supports the overall picture . . . that the electricity service has been a Protestant preserve."

IN ADDITION to these internal FEA investigations we now have the report on the operations of the FEA by Dr. McCrudden leaked to the *Irish Times*. McCrudden was engaged at the end of 1979 after complaints by some of the senior staff of the FEA regarding the workings of the FEA. McCrudden reported in February of this year and, as yet, his report is still officially secret. He lists twenty recommendations designed to overhaul completely the inadequate and ineffective enforcement powers of the FEA.

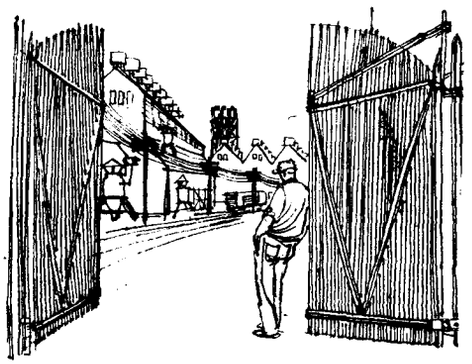
McCrudden shows that since 1976 only 216 people have complained to the FEA and, in 1981, new complaints were only running at two or three per month. Most Catholics are discouraged from complaining as there seems to be little point to it, given the fact that the FEA lacks proper prosecutorial power, personnel, financial support, and legislative enforcement machinery. By March of 1981 the FEA had made only ten findings of discrimination and had successfully prevailed in court in only one case, McCrudden concludes: "If one way of assessing the success of the agency is its ability to have findings of discrimination supported in the courts, it has clearly failed." He urges nothing less than "full-blooded affirmative action" if Catholics are not to remain the victims of job discrimination for many generations into the future.

As the British government flunked this issue in 1976 when it established the FEA, it seems hardly likely that the more conservative regime of Mrs. Thatcher will act upon McCrudden's proposals. Thus Catholics will probably continue to suffer the practice and the effects of discrimination indefinitely.

British government officials in the United States continue to argue that Her Majesty's government has addressed the issue of job discrimination in Northern Ireland. The British have always conceded that, prior to the imposition of direct rule from London in 1972, the Unionists in Belfast did indeed discriminate but argued that the British have outlawed discrimination. The British-appointed FEA, powerless though it is, now has clearly and unequivocally contradicted the official British position.

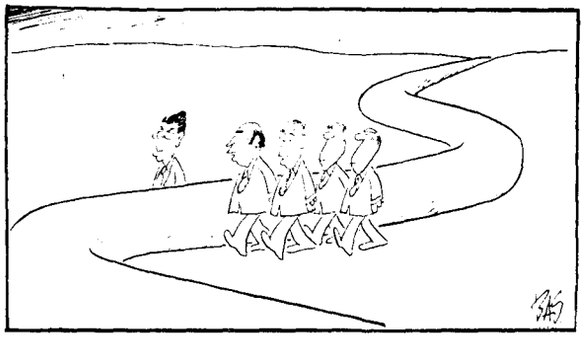
Catholics are now, according to the FEA, worse off than before the ten-year British rule of Northern Ireland. Moreover, in the absence of concerted action Protestant bigotry and supremacy remains unaffected and unchallenged. Catholics will continue to be forced to emigrate to find work, and the artificial Protestant-Unionist electoral majority will remain. The British failure to diminish discrimination condemns future generations of Catholics to the indignity of second-class citizenship in their own land—a continuing cause of unrest and violence which will surely afflict future generations as it has this present generation in Northern Ireland.

The recent *Irish Times* revelations raise two neglected issues. Firstly, why is the British government continuing to finance at great expense enterprises which discriminate against Catholics—the fact of discrimination having been established by the FEA, an agency of the British government? Secondly, why is it that American corporations doing business in Northern Ireland seemingly "fit in" to the system of discrimination without incurring the wrath of Irish-American politicians? Or, to put that another way, why is it that so many Irish-American politicians devote so little time and energy to the distress of Irish Catholics who are powerless in their own land, especially when this suffering is at the hands of American-owned corporations?



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHY ARE WE SO UNSYMPATHETIC TO DIVERSITY OF OPINION?



The view in Germany

JAMES O'GARA

PRESIDENT REAGAN and the other leaders of the Atlantic alliance arrived in Bonn for their NATO summit meeting early in the second week of June. I managed to beat them there by a week, thanks to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which sponsored an exploratory trip to Bonn and Berlin for a small group of American journalists. I doubt that the NATO summiteers worked any harder than we did on our stay in Germany, which included lengthy interviews with people ranging from West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Social Democratic party chairman Willy Brandt to the Christian Democratic vice-mayor of Berlin and assorted labor leaders and German journalists. Sorting out some conclusions from the resultant wealth of material is not easy.

Let me start with the peace movement in West Germany, Western Europe's most important industrial and military power. The first thing to emphasize is that a good part of the German peace movement should be stamped "Made in Washington." Every time a high U.S. official in the Reagan administration talked about the possibility of winning a nuclear war or engaged in similar loose talk, the ranks of the peace movement in West German and indeed all over Europe swelled significantly. Two years ago the peace movement was virtually non-existent; today it is booming.

Is there anti-Americanism in the peace movement? Yes — especially, some say, among those under forty, many of whom have their doubts about the Atlantic alliance and who feel, probably rightly, that German interests and American interests do not always coincide. This sentiment could be a problem in the future. Nonetheless, at the moment much that looks like anti-Americanism is really anti-Reaganism, a characteristic that seems to be declining somewhat since Mr. Reagan has emphasized his willingness to negotiate arms reductions.

The second thing to say about the peace movement is that it is not one but many movements, with membership drawn heavily from the Protestant churches, less so from the Catholic, with ecologists, anti-any-kind-of-nuke protesters, environmentalists, some Communists, a disturbing number of followers of a new kind of left-wing nationalism, and a good many young people who are simply alienated from the establishment.

Germans in the peace movement like to compare it with the freeze movement in the U.S., and in this connection *Der Spiegel* featured Senator Kennedy on its cover recently, but this is something less than accurate. The German peace movement has been calling for a one-sided Western freeze on deployment of missiles. The Kennedy-Hatfield proposal is for a verifiable two-way freeze on all nuclear weapons, East and West.

One way or the other the peace movement pulled three hundred thousand protesters into the streets of the sleepy capital of Bonn during Reagan's visit, although two important religious groups that participated in previous demonstrations declined to take part in this rally. The Soviet Union tries to exploit the peace movement but in West Germany it is not under Communist control — far from it. There are some Communists in West Germany, of course, but the wall we saw dividing Berlin and the crosses nearby commemorating the deaths of some of those who tried to cross it are all too real for there to be any widespread respect or support for Communism there. But an anti-militaristic mood seems to be spreading through West German society, and in this West Germany is not alone. A recent poll, for instance, showed that in long-time U.S. ally Great Britain, 56 percent of the population opposes the deployment of U.S. missiles on their soil.

How do the German leaders view the peace movement? Consider the attitudes of a past and a present German chancellor, both of whom lived through the Nazi horror. At the close of our interview with him, Helmut Schmidt volunteered that he simply could not understand the growing resentment of Americans toward young Germans who are marching for peace. Why is it, he asked, that Americans do not welcome the tremendous contrast the peace marchers offer to the spectacle of Nazi youth not so many years ago? And Willy Brandt put it even more simply. Said he of the peace marchers: "I have

JAMES O'GARA *is the Editor of* Commonweal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experienced worse things than young Germans demonstrating for peace." So have we all.

In general West Germans cannot grasp the American lack of understanding for diversity of opinion in another democratic country. Why is it so strange, they ask, if West Germans have a different view on El Salvador, for instance? One-third of the Italian population regularly votes Communist, and the U.S. takes it for granted, they say. Yet if one out of thirty West Germans signs an anti-missile petition, Washington is in an uproar.

ALL OF WHICH brings me to the question of NATO nuclear missiles on German soil. In 1979 NATO made a decision to install 572 U.S.-built nuclear-armed Pershing II and cruise missiles in five West European countries, including West Germany, beginning in late 1983. The purpose of this deployment: to counter the 300 mobile SS-20 missile-launchers the USSR now has targeted on Western Europe. The NATO decision was what is called double track: the threat to install the missiles was accompanied by a demand that the U.S. and the USSR open negotiations aimed at eliminating medium-range missiles entirely, Germany's preferred solution.

West Germany has long since renounced nuclear weapons for itself, but under the leadership of Social Democratic Helmut Schmidt West Germany declared itself ready and willing to allow the installation of 108 Pershing II and 96 cruise missiles in the country, if the Russians keep their SS-20s. This position was backed by all the major political parties, a situation that continues today, and Chancellor Schmidt made it clear to us that he will continue to support that position despite strong opposition from a vocal left wing in his own party. Threatening to resign on the issue, Schmidt forced a vote on the matter at a recent party congress and won by a 3-to-1 margin. Similarly, somewhere between 70 and 80 percent of West Germans polled favor a continued alliance with the United States.

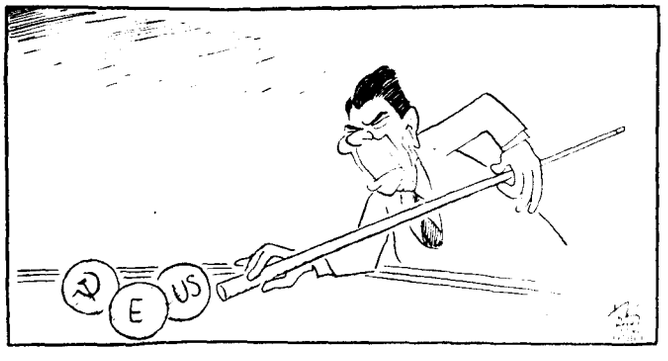
Nonetheless, at least two million West Germans have already signed a national appeal against the deployment of the NATO missiles. As Dr. Horst Ehmke, deputy chairman of the Social Democratic caucus in parliament, put it, they are protesting against the NATO missiles which are not even deployed yet while remaining largely silent about Soviet missiles already aimed at the heart of Western Europe. This stance includes a minority who lean toward appeasement of Moscow, but it represents something else as well: a growing loss of faith in American leadership, a mood which a newly changed Reagan tone may or may not be able to modify substantially. Many of the peace people seem to imagine that the USSR, without any signed agreement, will follow the West's example if the NATO missiles are not deployed. Unhappily, there is little or no evidence on their side of that argument and considerable on the other side.

West Germans and Americans simply do not see eye to eye on détente. Many Americans have come to think that détente was a sham that injured the West. Not so the West Germans. They never imagined that détente would solve the East-West problem — just stabilize it. We met no Germans who were not positive in their estimate of détente, and this universal attitude is reflected in the posture of the opposition Christian Democrats as well as of the governing coalition of Social Democrats and the smaller, business-oriented Free Democrats. As former Chancellor Willy Brandt put it, he like many of his countrymen prefers the German word for "easing of tensions" rather than the ambitious French term détente.

Something like one-third of all West Germans have relatives in the Eastern part of the country, which has a population of 17 million compared with West Germany's 61 million. West Germans are realistic about the prospects for reunification; no one I talked to had any hopes of its early accomplishment. They continue to regard West Germany as one state within a larger nation, but all I spoke to would agree with Willy Brandt's estimate: reunification can come, for all practical purposes, only if major changes take place between Europe and the East, and even then the result might not be one nation-state.

Détente, however, has brought a significant easing of restrictions on visits to East Germany and has stabilized the situation in Berlin. Few if any West Germans would readily give up either advantage. Furthermore, détente has also meant that thousands of ethnic Germans have been able to return to West Germany from Poland and other Eastern bloc nations. Finally, détente means trade, and West Germans believe that economic connections cannot help but improve the political climate. Again this seems to be a position held across party lines and I heard no dissenting voices. At the same time the extent of this trade with the East should not be exaggerated. According to Dr. Ehmke the whole amount of West German trade with the East comes to less than its trade with Switzerland. Indeed, Germany has more imports from Eastern Europe than exports. As Chancellor Schmidt emphasized, the West Germans are free traders by conviction and by necessity — they export 30 percent of their Gross National Product in order to pay for imports, three times the U.S. figure.

THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL item of East-West trade is the proposed natural gas pipeline between Western Europe and Siberia, with the largest gas resources in the world, in which West Germany will participate. The plan is to construct a three-thousand-mile gas line that will cost an estimated $15 billion. According to the scheme, the West will provide the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

materials and technology in what is essentially a swap for the vast quantities of natural gas the pipeline will carry.

Both the Carter and the Reagan administrations opposed the pipeline deal, arguing that once it went into service in 1984 Western Europe would be too dependent on Soviet gas and hence vulnerable to a threatened Soviet cut-off. Eventually it is estimated that Moscow would be shipping as much as one-quarter of all Western European natural gas needs.

Europe in general, and West Germany in particular, do not take the U.S. arguments very seriously. The USSR, West Germans say, has been in the gas-producing business for a long time and is not likely to be a less reliable supplier than other potential sources such as Algeria, Iran, or Libya. As the head of West German Ruhrgas told us, the alternative to gas for Germany is not coal or nuclear energy but OPEC oil — not the most reliable alternative in the world. The U.S. urged West Germany to buy U.S. coal instead but West Germans do not believe we have the shipping facilities to handle such large sales.

Chancellor Schmidt underscored the fact that West Germany was forced to import almost all its energy — oil, gas, and uranium. National policy is to avoid putting all their eggs in one basket — they follow what he called the diversification of risk. Thus West Germany never buys more than 30 percent of any one fuel from any one country. When the pipeline is finished, the Chancellor argued, it would represent only 6 percent of the country's total energy needs. As for the technology involved, pipeline supporters say that it does not in any sense represent high technology that would be beneficial to the Soviet Union, which already has a well-developed gas production system.

Perhaps the most telling U.S. argument against the pipeline deal is that it will give the USSR hard currency with which it in turn can build up its military capability. But if this argument is to be taken seriously, say West Germans, the West must stop all trade with the East, not isolate one nation, West Germany, as the target. And given the fact that agriculture is Soviet Russia's weakest economic sector, they ask, why single out the pipeline deal for criticism when the U.S. has just signed a very generous grain agreement with the Russians?

Added to criticism of America's wheat deal with the Russians is the general dislike of Reaganomics. Unemployment in West Germany, although not as bad as in the U.S., is at a record high for them, and this is hurting the Social Democrats at the polls. As West Germans see it, Mr. Reagan's huge deficit and high interest rates are ruining their depressed economy; they see no chance for recovery unless the U.S. changes course. And facing them somewhere down the pike is the possibility of an end to the fabled German labor peace. Codetermination in West German heavy industry has been a distinct success, with labor-management cooperation of a type largely unknown in the U.S. But I heard whispers that younger workers and rising labor leaders were more militant than their elders, and the head of the German Federation of Trade Unions granted that if the economy worsened still further, relations will get increasingly harsher.

Another thing the West German government disagrees with the U.S. on is Poland. Chancellor Schmidt believes that sanctions against Poland only make the Polish people suffer but do not weaken the grip of the military government. He regards the present situation as tragic, but he is not persuaded that General Jaruzelski is simply a creature of the Kremlin, believing that the General is convinced he is serving the needs of the Polish people. Like everyone else I talked to about Poland, Schmidt emphasized the very great number of postage-free food parcels sent by Germans to Poland — many, he said, in grateful memory of the food packages sent to Germany by Americans after World War II.

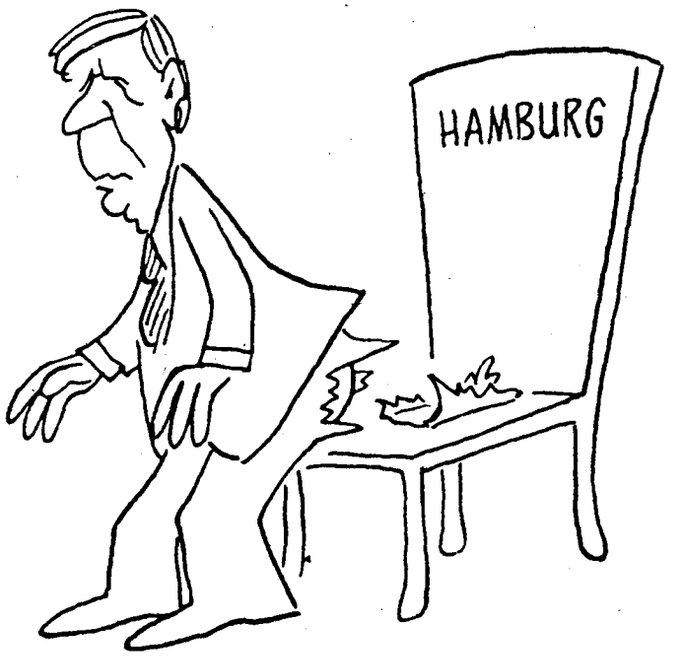
AFTER YEARS of a stability which was the envy of other nations, the political future in West Germany has suddenly become quite problematic. Here traditional, religiously related attitudes are important. The Christian Democrats under Konrad Adenauer led the nation in the postwar years. They are still the largest single political party but so far, at least, they cannot command a majority. In a country where Protestants and Catholics are almost equally divided, a high proportion of Christian Democratic leaders are Catholic, and I was told that a majority of Catholics voted for the party, although millions of Catholic workers in the Ruhr support the more liberal Social Democrats.

The Roman Catholic bishops rather clearly tilt toward the more conservative Christian Democrats, apparently viewing the question both as a matter of principle and as a matter of practicality. Thus when I asked one Catholic spokesman why the bishops so obviously opposed the Social Democrats, the answer probably said something about both sides. One of the first things the newly elected Social Democrats in one state government did, I was told, was to reduce the regular state subsidy for religious schools, and this is something the bishops were not inclined to overlook. For reasons like this and other considerations that go beyond dollars and cents — including simple tradition — the bishops regularly issue a pre-election pastoral that tends to be not-so-subtly pro-Christian Democratic. Some Catholics undoubtedly pay attention to this exhortation, I was told, but many do not, and it was reported that a certain number of Protestants have recently been leaving Christian Democratic ranks in protest over such partisan involvement by the Roman Catholic bishops.

The Christian Democrats would probably like to profit from the peace movement but it's hard to see how they can in the long run; they are at least as firm about standing up to the Russians as the Social Democrats. To their elders' embarrassment, the youth divisions of both the Social Democrats and the Free Democrats participated in the anti-missile peace demonstrations during the Reagan visit. The Christian Democrats suffered no such embarrassment—indeed, the Christian Democratic Union sponsored a large pro-American rally in Bonn shortly before Mr. Reagan arrived.

The Social Democrats, who years ago renounced their Marxist origins, have been in power for thirteen years, first under Willy Brandt and more recently under the moderate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



reformist Helmut Schmidt. They now govern in coalition with the much smaller Free Democrats, who are in direct descent from the tradition of nineteenth century European Liberalism and whom one of their officials described as now being somewhere between the Social Democrats on the left and Ronald Reagan on the right.

Although Mr. Schmidt's coalition won with a handsome majority only twenty months ago, it has been in a steady decline and plagued by internal divisions ever since. The reason: the Social Democrats are unable to agree over Schmidt's nuclear defense policy and they cannot come to terms with their Free Democratic coalition partner on economic policy. As a result, the Social Democrats have been taking defeat after defeat in local elections, the most recent occurring while I was in Germany, in Schmidt's own territory of Hamburg, long considered a Social Democratic fief. The results: 43.3 percent of the vote for the Social Democrats, compared with 51.5 percent in 1978 — their worst defeat there since World War II. For the Christian Democrats, 43 percent, compared with 37.6 percent in 1978. As things now stand, the Christian Democrats have become the big vote-winners in every major German city where the Social Democrats once commanded strong working-class majorities.

Still harder hit than the Social Democrats were their coalition partners, the Free Democrats, who did not even attain the five percent minimum vote needed for representation in the parliament. Making a surprisingly strong showing was a new group called the Green-Alternative List, a rag-tag collection of leftists, pacifists, environmentalists, and advocates of participatory democracy, all totally opposed to nuclear arms and nuclear energy. They won almost eight percent, picking up nine seats in Hamburg, and knocking the Free Democrats out of their third position. This ad hoc grouping now has representatives in five state parliaments.

National elections are scheduled for 1984 unless the government falls sooner, which might very well happen. After their severe setback with the Social Democrats in Hamburg, the Free Democrats voted to align themselves with the Christian Democrats for crucial state elections in Hesse in September, breaking a twelve-year-old alliance with the Social Democrats and putting increasing strain on the national coalition. In addition to that risk, there is the further question of membership in the upper house of parliament. In West Germany membership in that body consists of representatives of the states apportioned according to local party strength. A Christian Democratic victory in Hesse in September would give that party a two-thirds majority in the upper house, making all national legislation subject to Christian Democratic approval. This might well mean the end of Mr.Schmidt's government and new national elections — although there is also some speculation that the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats might even get together in that event and squeeze out the smaller parties.

Almost everyone I talked to said there would be little difference, especially in foreign policy, if the Christian Democrats come to power. That is the most probable result provided that a coalition between the Free Democrats and the Christian Democrats is forged on a national level. But there is at least a chance that the outcome may not be that straightforward. If both the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats continue unable to win a majority by themselves, and if the Free Democrats continue to decline, there is a considerably less likely but not impossible outcome: the radical Green-Alternative List, which is again expected to do very well in Hesse in September, may replace the Free Democrats as the balance of power and necessary coalition partner. At the very least the Greens would in that case influence Social Democratic policy, moving it sharply to the left. Exactly what all this would mean for the future is anybody's guess, but one thing is sure: the result would not likely be a simple continuation of the status quo. Washington, take note.

Screen

TEMPS PERDU

THE FABULOUS FIFTIES

THE ATOMIC CAFÉ gets its title from a real café out West that has a mushroom-shaped cloud painted on its sign. The sign only appears in the film briefly, but for some reason the notion of a diner must have seemed to Jayne Loader and Kevin and Pierce Rafferty, the makers of the film, symbolic of the whole era their documentary depicts. That era is the fifties, and I point out the peculiarity of the title only because of the coincidence that another current release dealing with the same era has a similar title. Barry Levinson's *Diner* is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

set in Baltimore in 1959 and portrays a group of young friends who congregate at the local greasy spoon to which the title refers. Like Levinson's film, that made by the Rafferties and Ms. Loader is a nostalgic look back at the period, a regretful memory of an innocence now lost.

The Atomic Café is not just about fifties' attitudes toward the bomb, but about the whole state of the nation then. It's about how the bomb fit in with the general state of mind. Essentially Loader and the Rafferties see the hysteria about Communism and the calmness with which people contemplated a nuclear holocaust as two sides of the same social coin. Playing down the danger of the latter complemented nicely the exaggeration of the former. On the one hand, a little town in the Midwest became so obsessed with the Red menace that the people put on a kind of medieval morality play about what it would be like if the Commies took over. On the other hand, when another little town, St. George, Utah, was threatened by fall-out from a nuclear test, everyone took it in stride. A shift in the wind brought the cloud toward the town, but authorities assured the locals that all they had to do was stay inside for an hour. When a concerned mother hears on the radio that the children at school will be kept inside during recess, she breaths a sigh of relief and goes back to her knitting.

People not only took for granted the necessity of tests like those which obliterated Bikini Atoll or the Castle-Dravo experiment with the H-bomb in 1954, they virtually ignored evidence of the human devastation nuclear blasts caused. Like the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, some Japanese fishermen who were accidentally caught in a rain of radioactive soot from a test became invisible men to Americans. These were the same Americans who waited in fascinated horror for every detail of the execution of the Rosenbergs. An unidentified witness tells how Ethel Rosenberg had to be strapped into the electric chair a second time when doctors realized she wasn't dead yet, and after her body was again jolted with a current a plume of smoke arose from her head to hang under the skylight of the chamber. The man reporting this was clearly shaken by the sight. Yet his faith in the Rosenbergs'guilt remained as unshakable as the faith that the goverment had to build bombs to keep America strong.

The Atomic Café begins with Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the "Enola Gay," talking about how routine the mission to Hiroshima was. At the end of the movie, a Civil Defense film shows a family crouching in their shelter during a Conelrad alert. "We'll wait a minute after it's all over," the father instructs the kids. "Then we'll go upstairs and look around, see if it's all right to clean up." A little later the same man appears in a living room that looks only mildly ransacked. "We've been lucky," he says. "The authorities will tell us what to do now." In between this opening and closing, the film shows us again and again how optimistic, how downright cheerful, Americans were in the face of nuclear annihilation. GIs literally faced the blast during "Troop Test Smoky" in Nevada; then they ran toward "ground zero" as soon as the shock waves passed. A cartoon turtle shows kids how to "Duck and Cover" as soon as they see the flash. A pop tune from the Korean War says, "There'll be fire, dirt, and metal flyin' all around. And radioactivity will burn them to the ground. . . . If General MacArthur drops the a-tomic bomb." A fellow interviewed as he emerges from his shelter tries to look on the bright side. If ninety percent of the population dies in an attack, he reasons, there'll be plenty of food and water for the survivors to divide up.

The filmmakers spin a number of hit platters from the fifties with lyrics about the bomb. (Remember "Thirteen Women and Only One Man in Town?" Can you also remember how the town got reduced to these abnormal proportions?) The songs are included for the same reason that the sign advertising "The Atomic Café" is: to indicate how thoroughly the bomb penetrated the popular imagination of the fifties. Reminders of it were everywhere. Anything with which a culture is thus pre-occupied has to have its darker side, though, and I think *The Atomic Café* would be more effective had it acknowledged the fifties' paranoia that was just as ubiquitous, if not as obvious, as bravado about the bomb.

A movie I remembered that ushered in the decade in more ways than one, for instance, was a 1949 thriller called *D.O.A.* In it Edmond O'Brien is a man who's been poisoned and has only twenty-four hours to find out who did it, and why, before he dies. All he learns is that he's accidentally involved in some kind of international intrigue over a rare metal known as "uridium." The time limit he faces and the certainty of his doom give a convincing desperation to his search for answers. "All I did was notarize one little paper!" he pleads with his last breath. An uncomprehending cop asks his superior, "How shall I mark the report?" "Mark it 'Dead on Arrival,' " the captain replies. The spooky aspect of the murder is the poison that O'Brien's anonymous, finally unreachable killers have used on him. It glows in the dark. You see, not everybody in the fifties believed the officer in *The Atomic Café* who tells soldiers participating in "Troop Test Smoky" that radiation is nothing to worry about.

Maybe the makers of *The Atomic Café* expect us to sense the anxiety behind the propaganda, to hear in the insistent confidence they show us a shrill and panicky note. I don't think their material works that way, though. They try to make the mentality of the fifties blatant enough to be shocking. Instead, it's *so* blatant, it's amusing, almost endearing. God must have been on the side of a people as simple-minded as these Americans. How else could they have survived? *The Atomic Café* is not quite the companion piece it seems to Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of Earth*. Schell's book possesses an honesty and an unexaggerated realism that is unparalleled in the literature on nuclear war. But with his wisdom comes a certain doubtfulness about whether we can save ourselves. It creeps into his last chapter despite his desire to inspire us to action. In our present, knowing despair, it's hard not to envy the innocence of the people in *The Atomic Café*. Like the kids in *Diner*, which I will discuss in the next issue, they seem to have been spared by their own ignorance and naiveté, by sheer, dumb luck. We don't believe we have sheer, dumb luck any more.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Minnesota can make it happen

Return Eugene McCarthy to the Senate

We are happy that Eugene McCarthy has accepted the challenge that must be made in the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party primary in 1982.

McCarthy helped shape the proud history of the Minnesota DFL in American politics during his five terms in the House of Representatives and two terms in the United States Senate.

He not only served every proper interest of Minnesota citizens, but earned a national and international reputation as a leader of uncommon courage and prophetic insight.

In and out of Congress, McCarthy has been in the front rank of political leaders willing to face the hard issues of peace and justice — nuclear proliferation and militarization of foreign policy, corporate feudalism and bureaucratic power, human rights and civil liberties, economic opportunities and welfare rights, and control of the IRS, the FBI, and the CIA.

This is another of those times when the right candidate and the real issues come together. As Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan says: "Gene McCarthy has been missed in the Senate. His absence has been manifest. His return will be most welcome."

We remember the eloquent words spoken by Eugene McCarthy in behalf of another great Democrat, Adlai Stevenson: "There was one man who said: Let's talk sense to the American people. . . . He said that this is a time for greatness. He did not say he possessed it. He did not even say he was destined for it. He did say that the heritage of America is one of greatness . . . He moved their minds and stirred their hearts."

We believe these words apply to Gene McCarthy in 1982 when he calls for absolute political confrontation of the kind which finally denied moral and political support to the Presidents conducting war in Vietnam.

Only Minnesota voters can return Gene McCarthy to the Senate, but we need your help in the weeks ahead.

The domination of national politics by family wealth and corporate Political Action Committees fostered by the Federal Elections Act now threatens the open politics of Minnesota. (As of March 1, McCarthy's DFL opponent, Mark Dayton, reported personal funds of more than $1.8 million out of a total of $1.9 million; Republican David Durenberger reported contributions of $1.3 million.)

Please help us return politics to the people and return Gene McCarthy to the Senate. You're helping yourself.

MINNESOTA DFL PRIMARY, SEPT. 14

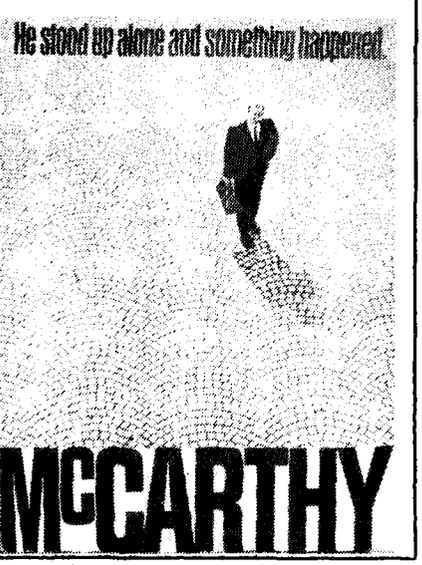
McCARTHY VOLUNTEERS
Mark Winkler, Treasurer
15 First Street South
Minneapolis, MN 55401

____I want to help return McCarthy to the Senate. Enclosed is $_____
____I want more information about the McCarthy primary campaign.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ooks: A THEOCENTRIC APPROACH

) EMBARK upon elementary theo-logical explanation is a very personal generously self-revealing endeavor. also rare. Much theology settles for ysis of waves, leaving unexamined nseen currents that define our direc- and destiny. It is, therefore, an intel- al event when someone reaches for adical metaphors and myths that sus- a dominant religious worldview and ects them to bold scrutiny. When the or of such a venture is a well-known logian whose work is admired by y, the significance of the event is ntuated.

mes Gustafson's volume under re- is the product of thirty years of getic labor in the field of theological s. He has not undertaken previously rk of such scope nor, he says, will he o again. He has given us a serious meriting serious attention.

is Gustafson's purpose to save us our "egocentric predicament." His ention is that both Christian ethics much of Western philosophical s have made humankind ("man," in term) the measure of all things. logians in this traditional under- ling seek ways of finding a "happy cidence between the divine law and t fulfills human life." Gustafson stly departs from this tradition of ppy coincidence." To do so, as he its, is no minor move for a Christian logian. Indeed, it may, in the opin- of many, put him outside recogniza- hristian perspectives. To base one's ocentric" ethics on the contention we have been strapped with a lemaic religion in a Copernican uni- e," signals an epochal change. It ns, he allows, that "one moves r to some aspects of the Stoic tradi- than most of Christian theology and s has. One entertains the possibility the 'law of God' does not guarantee fits to oneself, to the perceived sts and good of one's community, vea to the human species as a e." God is not nearly as "homocen-

ETHICS FROM A THEOCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

VOLUME ONE: THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

James M. Gustafson

University of Chicago, $20, 345 pp.

Daniel C. Maguire

tric" or "anthropocentric" as we had assumed.

Gustafson comes to this theocentric God by way of nature. Christian theology, he claims, has been too intent on seeing history as the sacrament of God's purposes rather than nature. Gustafson calls for a stress on nature as well as on history, prescribing, specifically, some heliocentric correctives for historicized Christianity. He notes frequently in the volume the scientifically predicted demise of the sun and this solar system some billions of years down the trail. This total death is our terrestrial and cosmic destiny and what it says of "the will of God" stirs more than a Calvinistic gloom in Gustafson's theological soul. "The 'Long Friday,' as the Scandinavians call what we call 'Good Friday,' is truer to human experience than the superficial Easters to which instrumental pieties of the present age seem to point." How do persons reassess their ultimate end in the face of this theocentric and not anthropocentric God? By accepting that their chief end is not salvation but simply to honor, serve, glorify, and celebrate God "as the Calvinists have always said but not always believed and practiced."

Clearly the implications of this Gustafsonian shift are seismic. For one thing, Gustafson gives us more badspel than gospel. Angelic choirs do not attend this book singing tidings of great joy. In no meaningful way can this theocentric and not a little eccentric God say: "I have called you friends!" (John 15:15) This God, to whom Gustafson assigns male gender, views us as "instruments" in his service, plans ultimate cosmic extinction for us, and then wants us to glorify and celebrate his grandeur. What's to celebrate?

Gustafson, it seems, has transferred "the egocentric predicament" from us to God. This is not a God who wants to gather us protectively as the mother hen would cherish her little ones. (Matthew 23;37) This is not a God who promises that the end of human life is not death but resurrection. This is not a "God of hope." (Romans 15:13) This God seems to have no more ultimate concern for us than he had for the dinosaurs.

Christian hope, I would urge, calls us to reach with stubborn confidence for the possibilities that lie beyond all current orthodoxies, scientific and theological, and to divinize no current state of any question. (That hope may be illusory but the surprises of both history and nature often support it in their fashion.) Is it patently absurd to hope that science which now reveals the sun's prospective end will, some billions of years from now, provide us the travel means to escape its terminal apocalypse or even the means to indefinitely refuel solar power? Gustafson indulges no hopes beyond current scientific promises. Like the natural-law ethicists he criticizes, he is too narrowly physicalist and partial in his assumptions.

He also finds no solace in Christian hope for immortality. "Christian eschatology, a theme used in our time to create conditions of hope for oppressed persons in the world as well as for those who aspire to immortality, must be questioned." Post-mortem survival is too anthropocentric for Gustafson's theocentric ethics. He does not sing with the ancient Christian hymn, *Dies Irae: "mors stupebit et natura."* (Death and nature will be stunned!) There will be no surprises for death. Its victory is assured and nature, as the arbiter of our hopes, enjoys hegemonic imperturbability.

Jesus is little consolation in all of this. While departing with many from a narrow Chalcedonic christology, (such incarnation is the essence of anthropocen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trism) Gustafson replaces it with no christology. Jesus gets lost in the theocentric shuffle.

These criticisms of the foundational assumptions of this work must not blot out many good things in the book. He criticizes the rationalistic density of much philosophical ethics. He signals (without developing) the role of affect in ethical epistemology. He cites the vacuity of some of the "philosophy of theology" that parades as hermeneutics. He chastises the self-righteousness of some social reform movements. He criticizes ethical dogmatism and false absolutism. He defends the reformability of historically conditioned religious dogmas.

And yet, ultimately, his evacuation of hope seems his undoing. Hope is the parent of social justice and reform. His kind of theocentrism is tendentially quietistic. The ultimate unconcern of this God could be catching.

The problem: no problems

HEADBIRTHS, OR THE GERMANS ARE DYING OUT

Günter Grass

Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, $9.95, 136 pp.

THE SAFETY NET

Heinrich Böll

Alfred A. Knopf, $13.95, 314 pp.

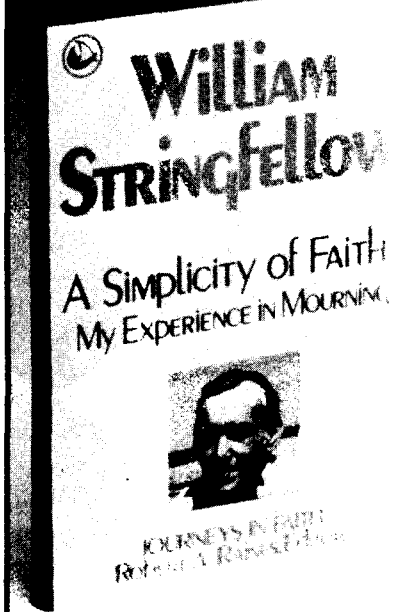
David H. Richter

POISED on its island of space betwixt the armed camps of East and West, poised equally within its island of time between the Armageddon of the last European war and that of the next, Germany sits. Considering its situation, it sits very comfortably indeed: the DDR is more prosperous than its Soviet masters, the western two-thirds better fixed than most of its NATO allies. With its wartime guilt a good thirty-five years behind, and its place in current world tensions reduced to that of the disputed center of the chessboard upon which Russia and America offer gambits, Germany's problems are the problems of a domestic system that works (can such things be?) almost too well.

Almost too well, at least, for the socially committed novelist, who must try to make passionate art out of these unpromising materials. Consider: no native-born underclass, oppressed and restive, only a small army of foreign "guest-workers" who can be shipped home at no cost to the unemployment rolls whenever the economy turns down. Consider: two parties, both liberal by American standards, each struggling to occupy the center. Consider: no overpopulation problem threatening to split a zero-sum society, but rather a birth rate that has fallen below the replacement level. The real problem, as Günter Grass recognizes in *Headbirths*, is that of not having any problems. On a 1979 trip to the Orient sponsored by the Goethe Society, Grass encountered at first hand its swarming millions of the Chinese and Indians, surviving on the edge, and fantasized what the world would be like if the German nation were expected to number, as the Chinese are, 1.2 billion by the year 2000. But from the nightmare vision of "a hundred million Saxons and a hundred twenty million Swabians emigrating to offer the world their tight-packed industriousness," Grass returns to reality. In "dying out" by failing to reproduce themselves, Germans are reversing that population pressure, that need for lebensraum, which had given rise to their dark history within this country. Instead, Germany is dropping out of history, producing only "headbirths" — like Athene from the brain of Zeus.

It is from this revery that Grass generates his satirical entertainment upon Germany and the larger, more fecund world. Instead of a single Gulliver, Grass invents a pair of intrepid travelers, Harm and Dörte Peters, typical Germans from a typical German town. Once student radicals, the Peterses have joined the comfortable system, teaching foreign languages by day, and by night salving their waning social consciences lecturing on environmental issues at the local Social

"In this stirring chronicle of death within community, grief becomes the somber flippancy of the clown and the account of mourning Promethean entertainment. Through it all we learn of the Word."
—Will D. Campbell



Renowned theologian/attorney William Stringfellow poetically captures the experience of bereavement and reconciliation. Along the way readers witness the forces and personalities that shaped this remarkable man's career. An unforgettable book. $9.95

Order from your local bookstore or
Abingdon
201 Eighth Ave., So., Box 801, Nashville, TN 37

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Democratic Party club. They speak out against the Brokdorf fast-breeder nuclear reactor, all right, but it is their own slowness to breed, their ambivalence about having children that concerns them most. They take their unconceived child — their own headbirth — together with all the emotional and rational arguments for and against bringing a little Peters into the world, on their whirlwind tour of the East. But like the kilo of liver sausage the Peters stuff into their luggage (it's meant as a gift for the expatriate brother of the friend who is caring for their cat), the Peters's headbirth is never delivered. Like the sausage itself, it returns to Germany with them, a little battered for its travels, the problem of Yes-to-baby or No-to-baby still unsolved.

But *Headbirths* is Grass's *Tale of a Tub*, rather than his *Gulliver's Travels*; the author is less interested in narrating the Peters odyssey than in interrupting it with a series of digressions — zany, bitterly ironic, touching by turns — about the difficulties of being a writer, and specifically a German writer today. The heart of *Headbirths* is here, particularly in Grass's fading dream of a Germany once again made whole by culture and poetry, even though it cannot be politically reunited. This was the theme Grass took up in *The Meeting at Telgte*, and which, he recounts here, he had enacted in private readings held in East Berlin, cross-fertilizations with the poets and novelists of the DDR. This proposed rebirth of a pan-German literature was aborted two years ago, the meetings stopped, the Eastern writers deported. *Headbirths* is, in part, Grass's satirical lament for the child that might have been. But Grass's implication that German literature is, like the German people, dying out is contradicted by his brilliant improvisations, by the lunatic vitality of his prose. And it is contradicted, in a very different way, by the latest work of his friend and compatriot, Heinrich Böll.

Nothing could be further from the tone of *Headbirths* than the meditative, introspectional atmosphere of Böll's *The Safety Net*. What they share is a concern for the problems of prosperity. Böll's protagonist, Fritz Tolm, has a bit more than the middling comfort of Grass's schoolteachers: he is the millionaire publisher of a chain of liberal newspapers. Quiet, intellectual, unassertive — his wealth and power seem to have come to him by accident rather than actively sought — Tolm would have been happier as the curator of some small museum than as a wielder of wealth and power in Germany. On the morning Böll's narrative begins, Tolm has been elected, against his private wishes, head of "The Association," spokesman for the organization of German media and industry. As a result, Tolm becomes the obvious target of terrorists on the radical left — his predecessor had resigned after receiving a bomb in a birthday cake — and the police weave, as they must, a "safety net" of security guards that threatens Tolm's peace and privacy almost as much as the terrorists do. This "precautionary siege" (as one might more literally translate Böll's paradoxical title) spreads to invest not only Tolm himself but also his wife, children, grandchildren, neighbors, and friends.

Despite Tolm's unique position as leader of the Establishment, his children have been drawn by Böll as representative of major political forces operating in Germany today. His daughter, Sabine, is a devout Catholic, unhappily married to a predatory and unfeeling industrialist. The elder son, Herbert, is a member of the "alternate society," a rigidly dogmatic leftist group with no program save terror and destruction. And the younger son, Rolf — in whom we see reborn Tolm's inner peace and strength — is a former radical, once jailed for a car-bombing, who had dropped out from both left and right; Rolf lives with his lover and their son on the fringes of society, supporting his family by gardening and repairing light machinery.

Böll's narrative method is the interior monologue, letting his viewpoint shift from one individual to another — most of them essentially decent people — in his large and diverse cast. This inner focus tends to bring out the ironies of his characters' lives. Tolm's chief antagonist, the terrorist Beverloh, had once been his superefficient protégé; Sabine's imprisoning marriage breaks up when she falls in love with (of all people) a security guard whose seriousness and religious devotion mirrors her own; Rolf the ex-convict is the only one who can offer intelligent advice to the security forces, which he loathes and which continue to mistrust him. The ironies tend to gather around a single issue: the frightening propensity of the guardians to damage what they are designed to protect. The constant snooping, the gathering of dossiers, breaks up marriages and careers in the lives of the neighbors and acquaintances that surround the Tolms, for which they feel perversely responsible.

But Böll's principal concern, even as the drives his suspenseful narrative to its poignant and wistful conclusion, is with larger ironies than these. Arching over the characters' relationships and fates is the fate of the German landscape itself. As Tolm surveys from the balcony of his castle the Rhenish farm country where he grew up, he can see the dredges of the strip-miners excavating the land, uncovering coal for German industry; soon, he knows, they will root up his past, and even the very castle wherein he stands. The cost of progress, of the protection that corrupts whatever is most worth protecting: this is Böll's main theme. And perhaps there is a still larger issue for which Böll's "precautionary siege" is only a metaphor: the safety net with which the superpowers have invested Germany, one more form of protection that spiritually destroys. This may be the ultimate burden of Böll's headbirth: his Germans too are dying out.

Sweet revenge

THE TALK SHOW MURDERS

Steve Allen

Delacorte, $12.95, 314 pp.

Peter Steinfels

CAN'T say I usually read suspense novels, for the same reason I don't drink diet soda—refreshing while it's going down but then there's the aftertaste—yet really the author and title of this one were too much to resist, given

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the fact that I was once on a talk show with Steve Allen and afterwards I briefly contemplated murdering him, which I didn't do, of course, out of cowardice, family responsibilities, a strict upbringing, and fear of getting my hands dirty, or so I thought at the time, not knowing that sooner or later I would get to review one of his books, or maybe I did know, tucked way in the back of my head, since it was in fact one of his books, a book on white-collar crime called *Ripoff*, that Steve Allen was pushing (and still is: it's mentioned on page three of *The Talk Show Murders*) that day on Ronald Ziegler's mid-day Washington TV talk show where I was supposed to debate, more or less, Jeane Kirkpatrick, then (1979) a Georgetown political scientist, about my own book, *The Neoconservatives*, and after Allen wound up his segment with Ziegler and while Ms. Kirkpatrick and I were slipping into place during the commercial break and the technicians were clipping microphones to our garments, good old Steve started to eat a Hershey bar, which was damnably clever in view of the fact that Kirkpatrick and I started stiff and slow, warily stretching our comments to impossible lengths for television, maybe thirty seconds, so that meanwhile back at the Hershey bar a basic law of physics was at work, namely that chocolate held in a warm hand under the glare of stage lights will transform itself into a gooey mess running down the fingers of a skillful entertainer at approximately three times the pace of the "debate" between Professor Kirkpatrick and myself, and the possessor of said melting chocolate bar is required to contort his arm and bend his hand just so, to keep the chocolate from running off onto his clothes, and to duck his head and crook it around to catch the dangerous blob deftly with his mouth, then give his fingers a few dainty licks and, if he is a Steve Allen, punctuate all this marvelous stage business with some oh-so-relaxed, self-deprecating humor, all of which is natural drama, so that compared to our intellectual circling and feinting, Steve Allen and his Hershey bar were a barroom brawl(a shootout at OK Corral, a police chase, a helicopter rescue, the TV audience being, so to speak, in the palm of Allen's hand, which is exactly what he had in mind the night before when he had practiced—could there be any doubt about it?—for hours before the mirror, cupping his fingers, twisting his wrist, smacking his lips, timing his jokes, and using up dozens of Hershey bars, unless, of course—why hadn't I thought of it?—this was something he'd perfected years ago and Professor Kirkpatrick and I were only the last in a long line of saps, easy marks, stage victims of this man who now has the temerity, imagine it, actually to write a book about . . . oh, I see that we've run out of time, folks, so gee, Steve, it's been wonderful having you here on the show to talk about your newest book.

Really thought you'd get away with it, didn't you?

REVIEWERS

DANIEL C. MAGUIRE, *a member of the theology faculty at Marquette University, is the author most recently of* The New Subversives: Anti-Americanism of the Religious Right *(Crossroad).*

DAVID H. RICHTER *teaches at Queens College of the City University of New York. He is the author of* Fable's End *and* Forms of the Novella.

PETER STEINFELS *is Executive Editor of* Commonweal.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 386)

universal. To agree to this is to capitulate to the most destructive features of the public/private split as I criticize it rather than to question, as I do, the language within which the realms of "public" and "private" are defined and evaluated. That Canovan contemptuously dismisses the sphere of particular ethical relations which alone provide the foundation upon which more abstract and impersonal moral standards are erected says rather more about her, and the politics of aristocratic disdain, than it does about *Public Man, Private Woman.*

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN
Institute for Advanced Study

(Continued on next page)

Paulist Press Announces the Publication of...

AN AMERICAN STRATEGIC THEOLOGY

by

JOHN A. COLEMAN

A forceful and comprehensive argument for the public possibilities of the Christian gospel in contemporary American culture.

"John Coleman has emerged as one of the strongest and most substantive thinkers operating at the point of intersection between theology and sociology. *An American Strategic Theology* is a remarkably sophisticated exercise in inter-disciplinary thought."

Richard P. McBrien
Notre Dame University

John Coleman, S.J., is associate professor of Religion and Society at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley.

Paulist Press
545 Island Road
$9.95 **Ramsey, N.J. 07446**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Women in seminaries

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Abigail McCarthy's column "The Bee in My Bonnet" [Apr. 23] makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of the full personhood of woman, a critical issue just beginning to enter the United States church's consciousness at many levels, including the level of priestly formation. Her suggestion that seminarians' imaginations be educated by required courses in women's experience taught by qualified women is a valuable first step. It can be seen as a first step in a conversion process from what is culturally a sexist position, but from Christianity's viewpoint a sinful attitude contrary to the Gospel. I venture to guess that few if any such courses exist in seminaries now and hope that her proposal will be considered and acted on in seminaries and theological schools throughout the United States. She deserves the thanks of those engaged in priestly formation for surfacing such a serious question for reflection and for offering a thoughtful constructive proposal.

I would like to offer a further proposal. Perceptions are changed by real human relationships as well as by vicarious education. Coming in contact on a regular basis with qualified competent women of faith at every level of the seminary process can indeed be direct and challenging re-education of the imagination. For it is not only the speculative dimension of the priests which is at stake, it is their pastoral practice. In order to relate with half their congregations as equal in God's sight, priests need such direct experience. Thus I submit that women have an essential role in priestly formation in just such capacities.

In seminaries here and there these relationships have begun to occur. Women are present as co-students, faculty members, supervisors of field education, on formation teams and as spiritual directors. The experience of these seminaries is valuable. It needs to be noticed, reflected on and shared with other United States seminaries as well as with priestly formation programs in other countries.

The Vatican visitation of United States seminaries, currently in its preparatory stages, has as its purpose, said Pope John Paul II, not to destroy but "to build up the Body of Christ in the authentic faith of the Church." Thus far, however, it seems to be carefully avoiding rather than noticing the presence of women in the seminaries. Such avoidance can easily reinforce Ms. McCarthy's assertion that "a theological perception of women as simply relational to the dominant male effectively denies woman's existence as an integral full human being of equal worth to men in the sight of the Creator." Affirming and learning from the United States experience will contribute to the building up of the Body of the whole Christ. As the visitation progresses we can hope that the latter will be the course chosen.

MARY IRVING, SSND
Spiritual Director,
Saint Paul's College

Poor relations

Newton, Mass.

To the Editors: As a woman seminary student, I read with interest Abigail McCarthy's article "The Bee in my Bonnet: Relational Woman, Integral Woman" [Apr. 23]. I too hope that some day men and women will be able to "share a full humanity." But while I agree with her goal, I must strongly disagree with Ms. McCarthy's analysis of the problem. She states that ". . . one half of the human race perceives the other half as something less than fully human, as existing only *in relationship* to the first half." Implied in this remark is an unnecessary division; we are asked to believe that we are either relational or fully human. But the fact is that we are all, men and women alike, both relational and fully human at one and the same time. To be human is to be relational; we all exist in relation to each other, to the created world, and to our Creator.

The response to those men who insist upon defining women as relational should be a reminder that so also are they relational beings. Just as women are mothers, wives, and daughters, men are fathers, sons, and husbands.

The problem of viewing others as only relational and not at the same time integral is essentially a consequence of seeing other people as objects rather than as subjects. To combat this all too human tendency, we should remind ourselves and each other of the biblical injunction to "love your neighbor as yourself." As we would not treat ourselves as objects neither should we treat others so.

If we are to ever bridge the gap that exists between men and women, we must begin to think more holistically; we must realize that while we are unique individual human beings, we are also all bound together in a complex network of interrelationships. Spiritual growth is a process of becoming aware of our interdependence and choosing to assume the responsibilities for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of others as if they were ourselves. Or, to put it more succinctly, we must strive to follow Christ's commandment to "love one another, just as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

CONSTANCE BARTON

A question of means

Manchester, Conn.

To the Editors: Although John Garvey raises some interesting and valid points in his article "Catholics and Sex" [Mar. 12], we feel that a number of important points deserve some comment.

First, he claims that since prevention of conception is the aim whether artificial or natural means are used, the means used are of no consequence. This is nonsense. Means are always of vital concern, especially where human life is concerned.

Writers criticize the Catholic teaching on birth control, never bringing up the fact that the IUD is not a contraceptive, but rather an abortifacient. The pill acts as an abortifacient in some women in some cycles. These facts make the question of means more than a question of "hydraulics" as Mr. Garvey puts it.

He also dismisses natural family planning as a less effective method of preventing conception. This distorts two aspects of NFP. First, NFP, properly taught, understood, and practiced, is as effective as any other method of family planning. Secondly, it distorts what NFP

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

does for a marriage. Communication increases. Women don't feel the entire responsibility thrust on their shoulders. Couples begin to take their power of fertility seriously.

A last objection was to the statement, "There are problems with the contraceptive mentality; there are at least as many with the mentality which finds contraception simply an evil." It sounds bad, but since it's so vague and unexplored and unclarified, it is so meaningless. Perhaps it's counterproductive to focus on this statement excessively.

We're hoping for a little more clarity, accuracy, and consistency in future articles on sexuality. We refer you to *The Art of Natural Family Planning* by John and Sheila Kippley, Couple to Couple League International, P.O. Box 11084, Cincinnati, OH 45211 for accurate and thought-provoking comments and facts regarding natural family planning.

BILL AND KATHY SIDDONS
The Couple to Couple League

Outside the mainstream

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: I was somewhat puzzled by some statements that John Garvey makes in his article "Catholics and Sex" [Mar. 12], in particular his assertion that "there were manuals of moral theology . . . which said that a woman had a duty to submit sexually to a drunken husband." Perhaps there were such manuals, but, if so, they were certainly outside the mainstream of the teaching of the classical manualists whose writings were the foundational formation of the overwhelming majority of priests. One could quote from Herman Busenbaum, the master moralist who wrote in 1650, and from whom the most influential moralist for centuries, Alphonsus Liguori, largely took his inspiration: "The wife is not obliged to render the conjugal debt . . . if the husband is insane because in such a case . . . the man does not seek the conjugal act with rationality *(cum ratione)* and in a human way *(humano modo)*. The same thing holds for a husband who is drunk. *(Quod etiam valet in ebrio.)*" This same teaching is found in Liguori himself in the 1750's, in Merkelbach in the 1930's, and in Noldin-Schmidt in the 1940's, the latter probably one of the most influential texts in our century. These are but four of more than a dozen other major authors who could be cited. All of them give still other reasons than drunkenness why a wife might rightly refuse the conjugal act. Merkelbach (with some reason considered among the more conservative)lists, for example: adultery, immoderate frequency of demand on the part of the husband, danger of death from pregnancy or any other truly grave hardship on the part of the wife. Lesser reasons than these justified a wife's putting off conjugal relations, if not out and out refusing them.

If Mr. Garvey can name even one manual which holds the rigoristic doctrine he cited, I would appreciate knowing it. It could, indeed, well be that one or another manualist took this strange position. But it is misleading to allow the impression, as Garvey does, that such an instance was or is in any way representative of moral teaching widely used in the church.

One question of further interest: What if a wife rightly refuses the conjugal act but has copulation *forced* upon her by an abusive husband? May she use contraceptive means to avoid impregnation? Moralists of this century beginning with Noldin-Schmidt in 1940 raised this question again, and, reversing most opinions expressed on this point in the seventeenth century, answered resoundingly: Yes, she may use even artificial means to defend herself against a pregnancy unjustly imposed upon her. Although Noldin-Schmidt somewhat limited his opinion in its scope of application, other authors including Visser, Peeters, Zalba, Derrick, and De Margerie recognized the right of the woman to use any means, short of abortifacient ones, in such a predicament. It is to be noted that most of these authors are of the much maligned "Roman school," and all have been strong defenders of the church's teaching on contraception as found in *Humanae Vitae*. Finally, it should be noted also that the Irish bishops, in November, 1980, issued guidelines which included these sentences: "It sometimes happens that the use of contraceptives does not

An insightful study of "belief" in the shaping of the American character...

Moral Fiber

Character and Belief in Recent American Fiction

By WESLEY A. KORT

Contending that belief plays a fundamental role in the formation of character in recent American fiction, Wesley Kort examines three dominant beliefs about the nature of human experience which are exhibited in that fiction. These three beliefs are that the human spirit is vulnerable to imprisonment in a world made by humans themselves, that the greatest evil in life is conflict (especially conflicting values), and that daily life represents an evil because of its incoherence and incompleteness.

Illuminating the writings of recent American writers such as Joyce Carol Oates, Norman Mailer, John Gardner, Jack Kerouac, Saul Bellow, Ken Kesey, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., John Barth and Thomas Pynchon, the author relates these writers to one another, to their predecessors in the American narrative tradition, and to representative figures in the development of American religious thought. $9.95 paper

At bookstores or from
Fortress Press
2900 Queen Lane,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19129

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have the real meaning of a contraceptive act. The situation may be one of 'quasi rape,' in which the husband forces intercourse on the wife, thereby contradicting the very meaning of married love. In these circumstances recourse to contraceptives by the wife would not appear to be an act of contraception *in the moral sense*, since this presupposes that intercourse is free, i.e., possesses the minimum degree of freedom necessary for a human act."

It behooves all of us in the church to let go of what our partisan fantasies tell us "the other side" holds in these days of debilitating divisions and to get back to respectful and honest dialogue with each other and with ourselves. Without straddling the doctrinal fence (I personally stand completely with the teaching of the church), I must nevertheless note that respect and honesty have been lacking by at least a significant number of both defenders and attackers of the teaching of the church or of her theologians of the past and present. What is even more insidious, however, is that often what is being defended or attacked is not really the doctrine of the church or of theologians truly in communion with that doctrine.

(REV.) EDWARD J. BAYER

Classified

RATES: 70¢ a word, one time; 66¢, three times; 63¢, six times; Classified payable with order; monthly in advance for more than three times. COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., NYC 10016.

Gonzaga University

Desire Priesthood? Over 25. Call toll free 1-800-633-2252, ext. 380. Write: Fr. Nigro, Gonzaga University, Spokane 99258.

Quarterly

Global threats to Third World minorities reported and analyzed in Cultural Survival and analyzed in Cultural Survival Quarterly. For sample: Cultural Survival, 11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138.

Flutes

Bamboo flutes. Niemi, Box 2412, Bloomington, IN 47402.

The author replies

I agree with Father Bayer's point: the dialogue ought to be conducted with respect and honesty. I offered as an example of a bad sort of Catholic legalism something which I was taught, and which my wife and mother both remembered being taught. Whatever Liguori and others of the best moral theologians might have said, their thoughts were summarized by other theologians, taught in seminaries, and then disseminated to people who remained faithful anyway. The manual which I was able to locate—it is, happy to report, hard to find these days—was Jone's *Moral Theology* (Newman, 1962). While Jone does not quite command wives to make love to drunks, it does allow only "complete intoxication" as a reason for refusal. The qualification made one elderly lady comment, "In that case the only problem is what you do with his shoes." I am afraid that Jone's approach to the problem was interpreted to mean that ordinary drunkenness, total lack of affection, and even abuse were not sufficient reasons to refrain from sexual intercourse.

If Father Bayer's point is that there has been some humanity in Catholic moral theology, I did not deny that in any way. I did mean to say, and I believe that the tone of his citations reinforces the point, that the legalism of our tradition was a bad thing. Here is more of Jone:

"Rendering the marriage debt is a grave obligation, especially when the petitioner is in danger of incontinence or would have to make a great sacrifice to overcome temptation. The husband usually petitions the debt expressly, while the wife does so implicitly, e.g., by showing signs of affection . . . In general one should rather call women's attention to the gravity of their obligation and remind husbands to be moderate." Jone's only exemptions from this wonderfully named "marriage debt" are offered in circumstances which involve adultery on the part of one's spouse, non-support of wife and children (but here the possibility that another child would cause great hardship to the family is not considered sufficient reason for refusing sex), lack of the use of reason on the part of the "petitioner" (and here drunkenness wobbles in, but it is qualified; only the *completely* intoxicated husband may be refused), unreasonable demand (which involves "such frequent intercourse that the constitution of the other suffers greatly"), and great danger to health and life. Here Jone is worth quoting in full: "Such a danger would be given in the case of gravely infectious diseases, of a very weak heart, etc.—The ordinary hardships of pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, and care of children, such as intense but brief pains, prolonged but mild headaches, etc., are not a sufficient excuse. Neither is the fear of a miscarriage or stillbirth, which the wife knows from experience will follow conception."

That sort of language either strikes you as indecent or it does not. I realize that these manuals were written for men who felt that they had to be legislators of a sort, or at least lawyers. This role itself wasn't questioned enough. It does reflect the dismal position priests often found themselves in: given the sad nature of so many marriages, something had to be done to make sense of what was often a mess. I appreciate that fact; but I doubt that this cold parceling out of duties and obligations helped much. So little here speaks of love, or of the decency of honest passion, or the goodness of sex. So much speaks of the obligations of women to suffer and, less frequently, men are asked to be a little less demanding sexually. Paul tells us that love does not demand its rights, and moral theology spells out exactly what those rights are. I don't know whether to laugh or cry when informed that certain moral theologians, as early as 1940, reversed the pattern of centuries and decided that it was all right for women who might be raped by their husbands to use contraception. It doesn't surprise me at all to learn that they are strong defenders of *Humanae Vitae*.

One final point. Father Bayer quotes me as saying that there were manuals of moral theology "which said that a woman had a duty to submit sexually to a drunken husband." What I wrote was "a drunken or abusive husband." It may or may not be significant, but wife abuse is not one of Jone's reasons for refusal.

JOHN GARVEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The pin's head

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: An angel being an immortal spiritual entity, it is non-temporal and nonmaterial and hence not subject to space-time; that being so, two or more angels may occupy the same space at the same time; and, that being so, an infinite number of angels may dance on the head (or, properly, the point) of a pin, or, for that matter, a mathematical point, which exists no more than they in the space-time continuum.

Like Alfred Priori [Verse, May 21], I haven't read *The Angels and Us,* either; but, twenty-five years ago, I used the question considered above as an exercise in definition in programs I gave for various banks and industrial corporations.

LeROY SMITH, JR.

Married priests

St. Paul, Minn.

To the Editors: According to the NC News Service, the pope, in a Holy Thursday message to priests, suggested that any relaxation of the church's celibacy rule would be giving human weakness priority over God's love.

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a true and noble vocation to celibate priesthood. What disquiets me, however, is that in this context marriage might be looked upon not as a vocation, but as a refuge for those who give human weakness priority over God's love. Where would priests and religious ordinarily come from but from parents united in the sacrament of holy matrimony?

What worries me too, is that speaking of *the* church's requirement of priestly celibacy may hurt the feelings of the married clergy in the Eastern rites of the same Roman Catholic church. Should they be looked upon as less Catholic and as having given human weakness priority over God's love? Unfortunately, love of God and neighbor seems at times to have been or to be somewhat wanting where Byzantine Rite Catholic priests (such as the Ukrainians) in union with the pope of Rome, do pastoral work in the same or neighboring areas as do Latin rite priests. Vatican II's Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests states that celibacy is "not, indeed, demanded by the very nature of the priesthood," (Ch. III, No. 16) and refers specifically to the tradition of the Eastern churches in which there are "married priests of outstanding merit."

It must also not be forgotten that Rome at times permits married clergymen who convert from non-Catholic churches to be eventually ordained priests of the Latin rite.

Ecumenical efforts would be hurt, particularly with regard to the Anglicans and the Orthodox churches which theologically are quite close to us, if we let it appear that in the Roman Catholic Church married priests do not exist or, at best, are only tolerated.

FRANZ H. MUELLER
Professor Emeritus of Economics
College of St. Thomas

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

MONTHLY REVIEW
AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE
EDITED BY PAUL M. SWEEZY & HARRY MAGDOFF

Special introductory offer for summer double issue—128 pages: $3.00
(Regular price: $3.50)

Contents:
The Vatican as a Left Ally? by Carl Marzani
Church and Revolution in Nicaragua: An Interview with Peter Marchetti, S.J.
Socialist Societies Old and New: Progress Toward Women's Emancipation? by Maxine Molyneux
Divided and Degraded: The Downtrodden Peoples of India by Ruth Glass

Send $3.00 per copy to:
Monthly Review
62 West 14th Street
New York, New York 10011

HENRI J.M. NOUWEN
A LETTER OF CONSOLATION

Photo: Kelly Wise

Deeply personal reflections on the meaning of death by one of the most popular writers in Christian spirituality. Henri Nouwen gently leads readers from an individual confrontation with grief to the universal hope expressed in the Resurrection. $6.95*

Harper & Row SAN FRANCISCO 1817 *At bookstores*

ALSO BY HENRI J.M. NOUWEN:

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW
An Invitation to the Spiritual Life
$6.95*

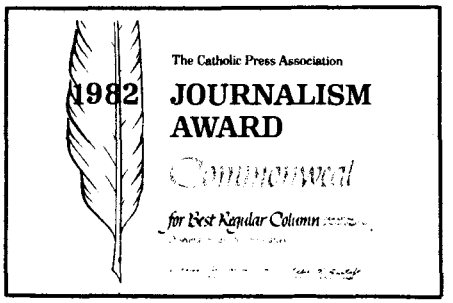
INTIMACY
Essays in Pastoral Psychology
$4.95* Paperback

*Suggested consumer price

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why did Commonweal just win five top awards from the Catholic Press Association?

One reason is sheer poetry.



I found a child's skin, freezing
wrapped over bones, a look
straight from the pit. Lying on my doorstep
. . . It was not on my doorstep. Space
held it over a sea, perhaps,
. . . Saints can't grasp distance,
it eludes their sense
as though all theres were here.

THESE LINES can only suggest the full power of Josephine Jacobsen's "Distance," published in *Commonweal* last October 23, and recently awarded first place for Best Poetry by the Catholic Press Association.

Commonweal also won the Catholic Press Association's first place for poetry in 1980. And in 1979. And in 1978. What's more, we suspect that *Commonweal*'s sense for poetry explains why, over those same years, the magazine has also won awards for its editorials, its articles, its columnists, its reviews, and its special issues. All reasons you should be reading it regularly. Send in the coupon below and subscribe — for the sheer poetry of it.

Six months for $9

FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

Please send the next six months of COMMONWEAL to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

☐ **I prefer a full year's subscription at $24**

7/16/82

412

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED